

The Horse as Cultural Icon

Intersections

Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture

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The Horse as Cultural Icon

The Real and the Symbolic Horse in
the Early Modern World

Edited by

Peter Edwards, Karl A.E. Enenkel
and Elspeth Graham



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Physical Pain in Early Modern Culture (2009), *Meditatio – Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture* (2011), *Portuguese Humanism* (2011) and *The Neo-Latin Epigram: A Learned and Witty Genre* (2009). He is a member of the editorial board of *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, *Imago figurata*, *Proteus: Studies in Early Modern Identity Formation*, *Speculum Sanitatis: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Medical Culture (500–1800)* and general editor of *Intersections*.

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INTRODUCTION

THE HORSE AS CULTURAL ICON: THE REAL AND THE SYMBOLIC HORSE IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Peter Edwards and Elspeth Graham

In the modern developed world, the appearance of horses in a peaceful public space (police horses in a town centre, say, or horses with their riders on a hack, stopping for refreshment at a food and drink outlet) typically draws a small crowd. Children approach diffidently to touch and stroke the horses, adults stand back, looking. Horses are unexpected visitors in contemporary everyday life: not quite exotic, but not familiar either. This estrangement between humans and horses has occurred abruptly and relatively recently. From antiquity until the 1930s, horses were fully present in the day-to-day world, a situation that only a small and rapidly dwindling cohort of elderly people can now recall. More than this, horses were not just a part of human life in the past, they were crucial to the development of modern societies and nations. But, despite the importance of horses, cultural studies scholars, literary critics and historians of all kinds have paid very little attention to their lives, roles and meanings. A continuing process of urbanisation since the industrial revolution, a general acceleration of technological change and, in particular, the rapid post-Second World War expansion of motor transport, may account for the virtual obliteration of knowledge of an older horse-powered society among the populace as a whole. It does not explain, however, the scant scholarly attention paid to the significance of horses. Paradoxically, it is, in part, the taken-for-granted centrality of horses to human lives in the past that has rendered them almost invisible to history. Victorian compilers of the calendars of State Papers, for instance, habitually failed to list references to horses in the indexes and not uncommonly omitted them from the edited texts altogether. Similarly, western culture and its languages are so saturated with terms deriving from the routine business of riding, breeding, selling, driving and handling horses that

we fail to notice them.¹ That horses are largely associated with leisure activity in the contemporary developed world has also perhaps diverted modern cultural analysis from attention to the roles and meanings of horses in the past. An unconscious transfer of value from present to past has meant that horse-related history may seem unserious, the product of no more than a hobby-based or idiosyncratic interest. The effects of a wider alienation of the world's human inhabitants from a natural environment and other species is part of the familiar story of how knowledge of ecological damage is not matched by a substantiating experiential awareness. This broad separation of the human from a natural environment also forms part of the general context to history's inattention to the formative role horses have played in shaping the world.

Recently, in reaction to growing recognition of what has been called modernity's species narcissism, a well-received sprinkling of books and articles on the importance of horses to history has appeared. Nevertheless, the range of meanings and functions of horses to early-modern societies and cultures remains under-explored. This book reflects the work of an already-established, international network of scholars that has sprung up to share and further develop knowledge and understanding of early-modern horse cultures. It brings together leading academics and younger scholars of distinction from a number of disciplines, most of whom met at a conference at Roehampton University in June 2009 to celebrate the career of Professor Peter Edwards, to discuss the multi-faceted role of the horse in early-modern society.

The cross-disciplinary essays here display their authors' diverse approaches to the subject, which, in turn, reflect the potency of the horse as a functional animal and as a cultural icon. Taken together, the essays assert and underline the horse's immense influence on early modern societies, offering a view of the animal from a number of perspectives, as highlighted by the tripartite division of the volume: Horsemanship and Status; Horse Breeding; Horse-Human Identities. Although the individual essays cover a range of separate (if inter-related) issues, they all share a central concern with the work of recovery and interpretation. Each essay aims to retrieve aspects of the

¹ Similarly, authoritative past and present editions of, for instance, Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, a play full of horse talk, or of *The Taming of the Shrew*, with its sustained series of allusions to horse management manuals, rarely pick up on equine references in interpretative introductions or textual notes.

knowledge and awareness of horses that formed part of the texture of life and thought in the early modern period. The empirical focus and directly historical argument of some essays (concerned with agricultural and veterinary practices, farriery or breeding, for example) bring attention to the actuality of the lives and roles of horses in the period. At other times, the essays are more concerned with the meanings generated by horses' presence in the world and the significance of horse-related discourses. How the actualities of horses' existence and horse discourses relate to each other, to more consciously symbolic or metaphoric representation of horses in literary or visual texts and to the early modern socio-cultural exploitation of equine symbolism to signify power, rank, individual temperament and political allegiances, is a concern of individual essays and, through its juxtaposition of analyses of different equine and equestrian discourses, of the book as a whole. As the essays here suggest, actual early modern practices differed between social groups and between places. Ideas about horses were similarly varied – there was no consensual set of horse-related beliefs or understandings. And the aesthetic forms and socio-political meanings associated with the representation of horses were, again, heterogeneous. The collection's recognition of ways in which ideas circulated between different discursive domains and of the disparities between, say, practice and artistic representations, or theories such as geohumoralism and literary symbolisation, reminds us of the variety and density of early modern thought about horses and its pervasiveness in the culture. If historical, cultural and literary studies are to achieve a corresponding complexity of understanding of the place of horses in past lives, it is the diverse, contradictory, shifting nature of horse-related thought in the period that begs to be further explored. John Bunyan, writing a collection of educational rhymes for seventeenth century children, could assume their everyday familiarity with distinctions between different horses' ways of going and how these relate to their riders' personalities and even spiritual states:

There's one rides very sagely on the Road,
Shewing that he affects the gravest Mode.
Another rides Tantivy, or full Trot,
To shew, much Gravity he matters not.²

² Bunyan J., *A Book for Boys and Girls: or, Country Rhymes for Children* (London: 1686) 49.

In retrieving aspects of early modern horse culture, the essays here aim to restore factual knowledge, but also to open up a sense of the complexity and interrelationship of those different levels of meaning that horse-related practices carry.

The essays, then, recreate a sense of how early modern western Europe depended upon horses, even if in certain regions, oxen, mules and asses shared some of the work. Horses acted as draught animals: they pulled ploughs, wagons and coaches; they worked a variety of machines, which carried out such vital jobs as draining mines, raising water and minerals and grinding corn; and they transported goods around the country on their backs. As saddle animals, they enabled riders to carry out a wide range of tasks, some purely functional and others leisure-based or performative. By the end of the period their dominance was even more pronounced both in absolute and relative terms. Even in areas where other animals were operating, they were making inroads. Social and cultural considerations further enhanced their value. These essays depend, too, on the recognition that humans and horses enjoyed a special relationship, one that operated on physical, psychological and cultural levels as well as on the material one. Alone among working animals (with the possible exception of hounds), horses were not solely judged by practical considerations. Possession conferred status and, as a result, horses were imbued with an iconic significance. If early modern society could not have functioned effectively without horses, nor could its human population have understood or engaged with the world in many of the ways we have come to associate with the period without their association with horses.

The relationship between horse discourses and more traditionally recognised early modern discourses is, as this suggests, both subtle and far-reaching. Ideas about horses in the period both reflect and inflect apparently distinct ideas about a whole range of issues: gender, social organisation, aesthetics, nation and power, for example. And allusion to horses can work at literal and metaphoric levels simultaneously, referring to clusters of issues and events through a form of horse-indexed cultural shorthand. For instance, Henry VIII's infamous reference to Anne of Cleves as 'a great Flanders mare' carries an allusion to her suitability for breeding as well as her physical build (and perhaps, also, placidity of nature.) So, this use of equine reference immediately indicates something of Henry's need for an heir and his attitude to women. But the meaning of his comment broadens when we also know he was fascinated by horses, horse breeds and breeding

and that he played an important role in importing horses to diversify English horse-stock and facilitate the development of different breeds of horses for different functions. Courtiers and members of the royal household were commissioned to buy mares for breeding purposes in northern and southern Europe and the Ottoman Empire throughout Henry's reign, and 200 Flanders mares were specially imported for his personal studs in 1544 to improve the stamina and strength of English draught horses.³ In the context of this knowledge, his 'Flanders mare' remark points not only to the idea that wives can be likened to horses but to the fact that the acquisition of wives was also an opportunity for the acquisition of fine horses: Ferdinand of Aragon had sent him, by Henry's specific request, a Spanish ginete, a Neapolitan and a Sicilian horse on his marriage in 1509 to his daughter, Katherine.⁴ The reference to Anne of Cleves becomes not just a disparaging, clichéd metaphor but more a highly determined reference to a whole cluster of significances, events and enterprises. The possibility of dynastic endurance, expansionist and protective foreign policy and a saturation in horse-knowledge lie behind apparently casual words. Flemish mares are not just analogous to potentially fertile women; the discourses of nation, marriage, gender and horse management are far more deeply intertwined.

As the essays here show, among the population at large the division between owners and non-horse owners marked a real division in society, though the boundary was fluid and fluctuated according to prevailing social and economic conditions. Horses were expensive to keep and, if under-used economically, were among the first 'luxury' items to go in a depression. Owners themselves were graded. Contemporaries could immediately assess a person's social status by his or her horse: its appearance; how it was used or ridden; and the way it was 'dressed' (trained and presented). Possession of a horse improved a person's economic opportunities too. Whereas Autolycus, the pedlar in *The Winter's Tale*, carried his goods in a pack on his back, some of his

³ Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, XIX, I nos. 831, 832 (London: 1862–1910), referred to by Thirsk J., "Horse in Early Modern England: for Service, for Pleasure, for Power", in Thirsk J., *The Rural Economy of England: Collected Essays*, (London: 1984) 383, and Edwards P., *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: 1988) 41.

⁴ Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, I no. 127, (London: 1862–1910), referred to in Thirsk, "Horses in Early Modern England" 382.

real life counterparts invested in a horse, enabling them to travel further, sell a greater range of items and increase their income.⁵ Naturally, a distinction was made between saddle and work-horses. Thus, a person, who kept a horse purely for riding, gained added status over some one, who used the animal primarily to earn a living. *A fortiori*, riding a cart-horse to church on Sundays did not create the same impression as going there on the back of a finely shaped Oriental stallion. Conversely, to be seen to be riding too good a horse could lead to condemnation for social over-reaching, as when the Quaker, George Fox, was, among several slurs, described as riding a 'great black horse'.⁶ He is here being accused of financial corruption (making money from his preaching), possessing a horse above his station and witchcraft.

Horses were versatile creatures and could perform a range of tasks and, where owners only kept a single animal, they had to do so. Naturally, given differences in size, strength, pace, conformation and even colour, some horses were better suited to certain jobs than others. Contemporaries were aware of these distinctions and, if possible, sought out specimens which possessed the requisite traits. Hill ponies made ideal pack-animals, for instance, while larger horses, bred in vales or on fen margins, pulled equipment, machinery and vehicles. At the top end of the market the elite imported horses from abroad. As a guide, they could use the information contained in the manuals on horsemanship, which became increasingly numerous from the late sixteenth century onwards. Authors adopted a geohumoralist approach, that is, they classified breeds and their qualities according to their country of origin, its climate and topography. Thus, cold-bloods from northern Europe tended to be large, tractable and heavy, while the hot-bloods of the deserts were smaller, fierier and more finely proportioned, and possessed speed and endurance. Of Arabians, Morgan stated, 'If you determine your race for the breeding of swi[f]t horses [...] the most excellent [...] is the Ariabian [...] which participating with the great influence and power of the Sunne is a Beast of wonderfull courage,

⁵ Spufford M., *The Great Reclotting of Rural England* (London: 1984) 54–58.

⁶ Fox G., *The Journal of George Fox*, ed. N. Penney (London: 1924; New York: 2007) 58.

swiftnesse and strength'.⁷ Warm-bloods occupied the middle ground between the two.

The title of the volume suggests that the emphasis of this collection lies with the horses belonging to the elite. As they possessed the means, as well as the inclination, to judge horses according to their symbolic value as well as their functional capabilities, they viewed them not as luxuries but as essential signifiers of status. The themes of the three sections reinforce this perception since good horsemanship and participation in equine-based pursuits such as hunting and hawking, the *manège* and jousting virtually defined a gentleman and thus membership of the governing caste. Moreover, the elite maintained the best-stocked and most varied stables, the ownership of a string of horses, each with its designated role, allowing them publicly to display their wealth and standing. They also took the lead in bringing about the improvement in the quality of horse populations through their role as breeders of fine animals. Even when their motives were frivolous or fashion-conscious, they might achieve advances in functional performance. Concern about the size and conformation of their coach team led to more powerful cart and plough horses, for example. Genteel landowners might allow a stallion to service their tenants' mares or, more commonly, sell on coach horses past their prime in the open market.

Apart from the elitist nature of the equine-based pursuits noted above, the upper classes argued that they provided them with training for war. In the sixteenth century jousting even replicated actual weapon-handling skills, though offering diminishing returns in the face of the firearms revolution. Such a view is a little disingenuous, even if these activities did offer some transferable skills. Traditionally, enrolment in the army in wartime, especially in heavy cavalry units, had enabled the aristocracy to justify their right to exercise authority over the population as a whole. Their ethos was a martial one and they could best exercise their notion of *vertu*, a concept akin to manliness, on the battlefield. However, developments in weapon technology promoted the infantry at the expense of the cavalry and threatened their *raison d'être*. Moreover, the extra penetrative ability

⁷ Morgan Nicholas, *The horse-mans honour, or the beautie of horsemanship* (London, John Marriott: 1620) 4–5.

of firearms brought about the demise of the aristocratic heavy cavalry detachments, which were replaced by bands of light horseman, armed with pistols and carbines. In this regime, more cost effective in terms of horses and equipment and training time, cavalrymen could now be drawn from a wider social pool. Bruce Boehrer has dubbed this development: the 'bourgeoisification' of the horse.⁸

As a result, the elite had to find other means of protecting their exclusivity and of demonstrating their wealth and status. According to Boehrer, they chose conspicuous consumption and in the process reinvented the horse as a fashionable accessory for 'sport, luxury and social display'.⁹ Treva Tucker's study of the French nobility supports Boehrer's view. In France, the old *noblesse d'épée* faced the challenge of the emerging *noblesse de robe*, men who had risen in royal service and whose virtues were of a different kind to those enshrined in the notion of military *vertu*. At the same time handbooks outlining the ideal qualities of a courtier started to appear, including the best known, Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), translated into French in 1537, into Latin in 1538 and into English in 1576. The book listed a number of characteristics but gave prominence to the qualities of *grazia* (grace) and *sprezzatura* (nonchalance). According to Tucker, the French nobility responded to the changing concept of *vertu* by learning the equestrian exercises then being taught in Italian academies like Frederico Grisone's establishment in Naples.¹⁰ The *manège* enabled its practitioners to display the new qualities of grace and nonchalance in a non-military environment but one which still demanded the exercise of the old martial traits of courage, good judgement, quick-wittedness, determination and stoicism.¹¹ In England Sir Thomas Elyot's book, *The Boke named the Governour* (1531) served a similar purpose to Castiglione's manual. He, too, recommended various exercises to the prospective leaders of society, placing the *manège* at the top of a list, which included the handling of weapons.¹²

⁸ Boehrer B., "Shakespeare and the social devaluation of the horse", in Raber K. – Tucker T.J. (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: 2005) 91–94.

⁹ Boehrer, "Shakespeare" 97.

¹⁰ Tucker T.J., "Early Modern French Noble Identity and the Equestrian 'Airs above the Ground'", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 280–281.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 282–284.

¹² Elyot Thomas, *The Boke called the Governour* (London, T. Berthelet: 1531) fols. 68r–68v.

Attention to the *manège* in a number of the essays here reflects its importance in early modern elite culture. Looking trans-historically at the evolution and generalisation of elite practices in the early modern period can also allow us to see how, in an evolved mode, these are the origin of practices that are all-pervasive in the modern world of large-scale corporations. Today, as we all recognise, we are supposed to manage everything: our hair, our diet, our weight, our time, our daily schedule, our data – and that is before we get on to our institutions or organisations and their management systems, processes and styles. It was in the mid sixteenth century that this apparently indispensable verb was circulated throughout Europe and first came into English from the Italian *maneggiare*, meaning to handle a horse or train it in its paces.¹³ This usage is retained in the globally-used word *manège*, for the enclosed school used for dressage. If we follow the history of the word in English from the sixteenth century onwards, we see that by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the meanings of ‘management’ had multiplied: it can, in the early seventeenth century, refer to the handling of weapons or, less frequently, to personal conduct (as a synonym to ‘comportment’).¹⁴ In the later seventeenth century and the eighteenth century it comes to be used in relation to land management (think of Capability Brown) and, from the first half of the eighteenth century, it is also connected with administration and governance. In the nineteenth century it becomes commonly associated with household and domestic management or science (as with Mrs Beeton in the UK, or Catherine Beecher and Ellen Swallow Richards in the US); and by the early twentieth century it is fully adopted by organisations and businesses, largely through the influence of F.W. Taylor’s *Principles of Scientific Management* (1909).¹⁵

¹³ Cf. Gerald Hammond, *The Language of Horse Racing*, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers (Chicago – London: 1992) 133. See Elizabeth Tobey’s essay in this collection for the origins of the term in Grisone’s writing on the *manège*.

¹⁴ These uses of the concept of management relate to humanist and courtly insistence on the importance of training the body as well as the mind. On training in martial arts, training manuals, and the cultural significance of these, see Sydney Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (New Haven – London: 2000).

¹⁵ The link between horse and organisational management was rather wonderfully recognised a few years ago by Manchester Business School which ran a series of expensive management training courses involving an experience of horse handling based on Monty Roberts’ techniques of ‘join up’ as a means of instilling leadership skills. Roberts M., *The Man Who Listens to Horses* (London: 1997); Roberts M., *Shy Boy: The Horse That Came In from the Wild* (London: 1999). Manchester Business School’s deployment of ideas derived from Monty Roberts’ work: <http://www.mbs.ac.uk/programmes/edc/leadership/html/explained.cfm>, accessed 05.08.2003.

What this brief etymology generally suggests is that all of these applications of the word imply scientific systems, and the bringing of productivity, order and harmony out of relationships between disparate elements, some of which are deemed to be, by their nature, unruly or uncontained. The history of the word is bound up with a history of what is perceived to need controlling in order to be exploited or turned to account: from horses, weapons and conduct (the tools and signs of Renaissance nobility) to sources of economic productivity and organisational activity. Implicit in the word and its history, though, are not just changing objects of use and control but a constant refinement of power dynamics. Several essays in this collection investigate ways in which matters of horse management are linked to matters of political value and organisation. What these essays also imply is how ideas about the structuring of power, traced back across several centuries, derive from early modern ideas about, and practices of, the *manège* and the relationships they create between humans and horses.

Concern with the equestrian practices of elites also returns us from a history of ideas to a more material realm of history. In every country, the elite acted as the focal point for thousands of people who earned an income from them as suppliers of equine-based labour, goods or services. They included the staff at estate studs and stables; the trainers, who broke-in young horses, the farriers, who dealt with illnesses and injuries, and the blacksmiths, who shod the hooves; the dealers and merchants; the manufacturers of tack and riding-gear; the coach builders and ancillary tradesmen; the coachmen and postillions; the providers of fodder; and the designers and builders of stable blocks. Of course, the elite did not monopolise their services; even coach builders earned money from the construction of hackney- and stage-coaches required for the burgeoning transport network, which, catering *inter alia* for the middling orders, expanded during the course of the seventeenth century. The favoured few suppliers, who worked on or near a gentleman's estate or who fashioned a luxury version of a particular commodity, did well out of elite patronage, but most people made their money from doing business with the wider public. In spite of its aristocratic focus, this book does not ignore the horse-related activities of the non-elite classes. Indeed, several of the essays concentrate wholly or partially on them, whether farriers in England and Germany, 'bourgeois' suppliers of horses to the parliamentary army or the farmers of England and the Philippines.

Horsemanship and Status

Horsemanship was deemed one of the essential attributes of a gentleman. James I of England and VI of Scotland told his son, Prince Henry, that 'It becometh a Prince better than any other man to be a fair and good horseman'.¹⁶ To be seen riding a mettlesome horse was to project an image of power and authority, the mastery of such a creature affirming the rider's fitness to rule. According to Boehrer's argument, this could be viewed as an example of displacement, the *manège*, as metonym, compensating the aristocracy for the loss of their military status along with the decline of the heavy cavalry. Pia Cuneo's essay emphasizes the link between horsemanship and status in a close examination of the illustrations from two German books on the training process. To ride well, she points out, was a difficult skill to master. It was a noble art, one that called for the possession of a range of qualities: physical, emotional and moral. Apart from requiring good balance, steadiness and courage, riding instilled leadership skills. It also taught humility. Unlike courtiers or underlings, who might flatter the young nobleman, a horse was honest, punishing an error by depositing the rider on the ground, as one of Cuneo's engravings depicts.

Greg Bankoff's essay broadens out the discussion, revealing the problem that Europeans faced when trying to take such social signifiers as fine horses and refined horsemanship with them when they settled in the colonies. In the Philippines, as in the mother country, the authorities sought to deploy them as symbols of status and power. Their attempts, however, were frustrated, partly because of the difficulty in obtaining sufficient numbers of horses of the requisite stature and conformation but also on account of the local environment. As the animal went 'native' and decreased in size, it no longer provided a suitable mount, on which to posture. Sandra Swart's study of the role of horses in the late medieval and early modern kingdoms of sub-Saharan Africa indicates that native rulers also valued as status symbols the fine horses that they obtained to the north of the desert. In places, however, their horsemanship skills did not always match the quality of the horses. In the kingdoms of Dahomey and Benin, for

¹⁶ Reese M.M., *The Royal Office of Master of the Horse* (London: 1976) 166.

example, attendants often had to prop up the chiefs in the saddle in order to prevent them falling off.

Cuneo's essay, which discusses the semiotics of the paintings and engravings she presents, shows that the upper classes were as concerned with their representation on canvas as they were with the image they projected in person. If no artist could capture the sheer physical presence and elemental strength of a powerful horse, viewed in the flesh, he could improve on reality in his portrayal of the sitter. In the sixteenth century the stallion of choice was a Neapolitan courser; a large, strong well-proportioned mount, its career as a parade animal outlived its value as a warhorse which decayed along with the demise of the heavily armoured man-of-war. By the early seventeenth century Spanish ginetes had replaced Neapolitan coursers in equestrian portraits, as in Diego Velázquez's painting of the Spanish chief minister, Count-Duke Olivares (c. 1636), reproduced in this volume. To enhance the image, sitters tended to be dressed in full armour, an indication that the iconic appeal of a mounted knight still resonated in the minds of the aristocracy, even if they had lost their monopoly of places in the cavalry. Anthony Van Dyck's equestrian portrait of Charles I (1633) depicts him in cuirassier armour and holding a field-marshal's baton. The setting for the picture in St. James's Palace, at the end of a corridor flanked by portraits of Roman emperors, enhanced the iconic appeal of the image.¹⁷ The inclusion of Charles's riding master, St. Antoine, who looks on in admiration, suggests that the king was a skilled horseman and hence fit to occupy the throne at a time when elements of the political nation were doubting it.

A number of contributors examine the relationship between service in the cavalry and status. Gavin Robinson makes a major contribution to the Boehrer debate in his essay, which looks at the impact of technology on the nature and importance of mounted warfare, mainly in early modern England and with a particular emphasis on the Civil War period. He also assesses its effect on the social composition of the troops, his analysis revealing a marked decline in status between the men-at-arms, who fought at Agincourt in 1415, and those, who served in parliamentary troops in the English Civil Wars. Jennifer Flaherty and Ian MacInnes also look at the Battle of Agincourt, but as Shakespeare depicted it. In *Henry V* the French horses and riders are

¹⁷ Edwards P., *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London: 2007) 29–30.

far superior to their English counterparts but that did not guarantee a victory. Indeed, Shakespeare equates the French aristocracy's uncritical obsession for their horses as a sign of decadence and an indication of the degeneration of the landed elite as a military caste. In his portrayal of Hotspur, moreover, Shakespeare derides the attitudes of martial-fixated noblemen, the implication being that things were different in his day. On the other hand, Elizabeth Socolow's study of Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesie*, reveals that Shakespeare's view was not necessary the only one expressed at the time. The aristocracy may have lost one military indicator of status but to Sidney soldiering still enabled its members to exercise *vertu*. As he declared, 'Soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of souldiers'. Elsewhere in the world, Swart's essay discusses the deployment of cavalry in sub-Saharan Africa from the middle ages onwards. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the traditional use of local ponies declined as Muslim rulers, returning from pilgrimage to the north of the Sahara, adopted the cavalry tactics they had observed there, along with their bits, saddles and stirrups, and armour for the riders.

The quintessential test of a good horseman was skill in the *manège*, which arguably replaced military-based horsemanship as the means whereby aristocrats could display then current notions of *vertu*. As Elizabeth Tobey indicates in her essay, pupils came from far and wide to study horsemanship at these academies, especially at Grisone's establishment in Naples. One of his English pupils was Robert Alexander, who became Henry VIII's riding master at Hampton Court.¹⁸ Italian riding masters also received invitations from abroad. Alexander de Bologna and Jacques de Granado were officers in Henry VIII's stables, while in Elizabeth I's reign, the Earl of Leicester, her Master of the Horse, and his step-son, Sir Philip Sidney, were responsible for the presence in the country of Claudio Corte, Prospero d'Osma and a Signor Romano. In addition, Sir Philip wrote about Giovanni Pietro Pugliano in *The Defence of Poesie*. When Sidney stayed at Vienna in 1574 Pugliano had instilled in him the 'true' virtues and values of horsemanship and, as Socolow shows in her essay, drew on his mentor's equine-based philosophy for his own argument.¹⁹ 'Great' horses, as those suitable to perform the exercises were known, had to be strong

¹⁸ Ibid., 50.

¹⁹ Stewart A., *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: 2000) 131–132.

and spirited, well-balanced and with a fine conformation, and were therefore very expensive. The outlay, in terms of the cost of mounts, buildings, servants and equipment, as well as in the time spent acquiring the skills and training the horses, was substantial and therefore represented a clear expression of conspicuous consumption.

Pupils, in turn, became masters and might attract a following. In 1609 Morgan praised Robert Alexander for his work: 'Not onely he in England was esteemd,/But eeke in forraine Countries for his Art/ [...] Had many men of worth and great renowne/That were his schollers [...]'.²⁰ In France, graduates returning from Italy established their own academies, Antoine de Pluvinel opening the first one in 1594. They proved popular among (and more convenient for) young men of high birth anxious to acquire the skills that would enable them to display the revised version of *vertu*.²¹ As a result, France quickly replaced Italy as the centre of horsemanship. English gentlemen, for instance, finished their education in Paris. In a letter of 9 January 1615/6, addressed to his son in the French capital, Sir John Holles wrote of the value of the schooling he was receiving in terms which suggest the value placed on *grazia* and *sprezzatura* in the educational experience. He observed,

For what makes a good horseman, but the practise of many horses, which according To their severall mouthes, natures, and abilities, exercise eache, and all parts of horsemanship, wherein I hope you will prove a proficient, and in your dauncing and Weapon also, seeing you are in the mart, wher both best, and best cheap [...] may be had.²²

Conversely, one could learn from an imported riding master. Thus, James I's sons, Charles and Henry, along with a group of young aristocrats, including William Cavendish, the future Earl, Marquis and, finally, Duke of Newcastle, learned about horsemanship from St. Antoine, the protégé of Antoine de Pluvinel, esteemed as the leading riding master of his day.²³

From Grisone onwards, these riding masters extended their influence through the manuals they wrote. As Tobey shows, Grisone's book, *Gli Ordini di Cavalcare* (1550), translated as *The Rules of Riding*, was

²⁰ Morgan Nicolas, *The Perfection of Horse-manship, drawne from Nature; Arte and Practise* (London, E. White: 1609) f. B3.

²¹ Tucker, "French Noble Identity" 281.

²² Seddon P.R., "Letters of John Holles, 1587–1637", *Thoroton Society, Record Series* 31 (1975) 10.

²³ Strong R., *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's lost Renaissance*, (London: 2000) 41–42.

particularly significant, especially in the loose, adapted translation that appeared in Thomas Blundeville's *The Arte of Rydyngge* (c. 1560), the first book on horsemanship written by an Englishman. De Pluvinel's *Le Maneige royal* (1623) was equally influential on the mainland of Europe in publicising the French style of horsemanship.²⁴ Newcastle was not that impressed, arguing that continental writers were too rigid in their training methods. Even so, because, as Elaine Walker points out, his avowed aim was to write the definitive handbook on horsemanship, his comments have to be read with this in mind. Most of the published manuals did not concentrate solely on the *manège*. In England, Blundeville's second book, *The fower chiefyst offices belongyng to horsemanshippe* (1565) was a more comprehensive text, consisting of a slightly amended version of his previous book, augmented by a number of additional chapters. It provided gentlemen with practical advice on breeding, diet and medical treatment, as well as giving tips on training horses in order that might display the right image in public. As John Astley wrote in his book, *The Art of Riding* (1584), 'Now then, when a horse is thus taught and brought to perfection [...] he will accompanie you, and you shall accompanie him in time and measure, so as to the beholders it shall appeare, that he and you be one bodie, of one mind, and of one will'.²⁵ As Socolow and Tobey emphasise in their essays, the concept of 'measure', that is, 'timing' and 'rhythm' – hence, harmony – was a key *desideratum* of contemporary manuals on horsemanship.

In a largely formalist essay, Elspeth Graham discusses the horsemanship texts of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, in order to explore a variety of political and psychological meanings behind their aesthetics. She links these to Newcastle's career and the centrality of horsemanship in general and the *manège* in particular, to it. By situating Newcastle's life and his horsemanship in the broader context of the period from the Civil War to the Restoration, and his texts more widely within the context of baroque style, she suggests ways in which the history of the seventeenth century is written into Newcastle's life and his relationship to horses and horsemanship. In doing so, she indicates how ideas deriving from horsemanship were central to the habits of thought and cultural practices of the century. Newcastle,

²⁴ Raber K., "A Horse of a Different Color: Nation and Race in early Horsemanship Treatises", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 231.

²⁵ Astley John, *The Art of Riding* (London, Henrie Denham: 1584). 56.

along with Prince Henry and one or two of the others, who had learned horsemanship from St. Antoine, established riding schools on their properties. Newcastle's creation, built at Welbeck in 1623–24, still stands, though converted into a chapel and library. The later riding school he built at Bolsover Castle in Nottinghamshire, however, survives as one of the finest examples of a riding house in Britain.²⁶

Contemplating the loss of power, while in exile in the 1650s, Newcastle wrote about horsemanship and authority and practised the art of the *manège*. He argued that the *manège* was not merely an exercise in showing-off one's ability to perform tricks but had a practical value too, giving the rider greater control when out riding, whether hunting or on the battlefield.²⁷ Many English gentlemen must have questioned this assertion because the *manège* never attained the same level of popularity as it did on the continent in spite of the exhortations of *aficionados* like Newcastle and writers of manuals such as Gervase Markham and Thomas de Grey. As de Grey wrote, 'It much troubleth me to see how little esteeme gentlemen now a dayes thereof. Some horses they have, though not for the *ménage* yet for hunting'.²⁸ A select group of English noblemen embraced it as such but lower down the genteel ladder many squires seem to have focused their attention on other priorities. Hunting remained their passion. For aristocrats, who wanted to spend a lot of money in an ostentatious fashion, horse racing served as the most popular option. In France, for the reasons that Tucker puts forward, riding schools were numerous. According to Evelyn, writing in 1644, hardly any town of note lacked one, a benefit which he thought accounted for French superiority in horsemanship.²⁹

²⁶ For further information on Newcastle's riding schools, read the following works by Lucy Worsley: Worsley L., *Bolsover Castle* (London: 2000); Worsley L. – Addyman T., "Riding Houses and Horses: William Cavendish's Architecture for the Art of Horsemanship", *Architectural History* 45 (2002) 194–229; Worsley L., "Building a Family: William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle, and the Construction of Bolsover and Nottingham Castles", *The Seventeenth Century* 19 (2004); Worsley L., "His Magnificent Buildings: William Cavendish's Patronage of Architecture", in Benden B. van – and Poorter N. de (eds.), *Royalist Refugees: William and Mary Cavendish in the Rubens House 1648–1660* (Antwerp: 2006).

²⁷ Cavendish William, *A New Method, and Extraordinary Invention, to Dress Horses* (London, Thomas Milbourn: 1667) 5–6.

²⁸ De Grey, Thomas, *The Compleat Horseman and Expert Ferrier* (London, Nicholas Vavasour: 1639) I, f. C2.

²⁹ De Beer E.S. (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn I* (Oxford: 1955) 88.

Horsebreeding

Breeding and rearing horses was a complicated and expensive business: the horses cost a lot to maintain, required careful handling and were prone to illness and injury. Once past their useful life, however construed, horses were virtually worthless, being valued at two or three shillings at most for their hide and as dog meat. Most horse keepers learned the requisite skills informally through emulation, by word of mouth or even trial and error. Gentry and substantial farmers, on the other hand, could seek advice in the manuals on horsemanship that proliferated during the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These manuals can be divided into two general categories: those that dealt with a specific subject, usually farriery, and those which provided general advice of horsemanship and allied themes. Thomas Blundeville's book, *The fower chiefyst offices belongyng to horsemanshippe*, illustrates the typical content of the second type. In four distinct sections the author deals with the 'offices' of the breeder, rider, keeper and farrier, that is, with production, breaking-in and training, maintenance and medical care. Most of these writers were (or claimed to be) gentlemen and assumed a genteel readership.³⁰

When it came to acting on the advice of the manuals to improve breeds by importing foreign horses only the elite could afford the exorbitant costs involved. In England, as elsewhere, the crown took the lead, exhorting courtiers and wealthy landowners to improve their breeding programmes, using the finest specimens wherever they could be found. Peter Edwards's essay reviews the improvements that were being made to English horses throughout the period. If, as he postulates, the country's saddle and draught horses were among the worst in Europe in 1500, a century later signs of improvement were clearly discernible. The positive trend accelerated over the course of the following hundred years, in spite of the destructive effects of the Civil Wars. Newcastle in 1657/8 and Blome in 1686 both commented on the quality of the country's horses, highlighting the benefits wrought by the admixture of foreign blood.³¹ By the turn of the seventeenth century, moreover, the thoroughbred was beginning to emerge, though it took

³⁰ MacKay M.H., *Equine Medicine in a Horse Drawn World: Farriery, Horse-Doctoring and Equine Surgery in England c.1680–c.1800* (University of York Ph.D.: 2009) 30–31.

³¹ Blome Richard, *The Gentleman's Recreation* (London: 1686) part II, 2.

a further fifty years before it could be termed an established breed. Apart from the impact of these horses on racing, the widespread practice of using them for cross-breeding purposes enhanced the quality of saddle horses in general. Significantly, if Blome highlighted the equine pursuits of the elite, his survey also encompassed improvements in the horses used by the population at large. Indeed, coat colours of horses sold at English fairs indicate that the blood of Low Countries draught horses had become widely disseminated among the nation's stock.

MacInnes's essay examines Shakespeare's deployment of the geohumoralist argument to provide a dramatic contrast between the physical and mental make-up of the English and French soldiers and their horses on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt. Even if English horses were improving by the time he was writing the play, MacInnes correctly argues that Shakespeare's views did reflect contemporary concern over the quality of such a strategic item. Moreover, allowing for poetic licence, the pathetic image of English horses that the bard conjured up, accorded well with early sixteenth century accounts, if not necessarily with evidence from 1415. The low base made the improvements that occurred over the course of the following 200 years all the more dramatic. Of course, as Morgan pointed out in 1609, some of the foreign horses were inferior to native ones. Much depended upon the source of supply. While dealers might defraud the unwary with the mere mention of an exotic breed, diplomatic gifts or deals between rulers comprised top quality horses. As Edwards relates, Henry VIII initiated the process of improvement by deploying the horses he acquired from other west European rulers as breeding stock.

From a geohumoralist point of view, this was not necessarily the answer to the problem, a point which MacInnes deals with in his response to Morgan's question about how imported horses would fare in the alien conditions they faced. Edwards and Nash, in their different ways, prove that Oriental hot-bloods could thrive in the damp, cool environment of seventeenth and early eighteenth century England. Bankoff's essay, on the other hand, emphasizes the power of environmental conditions to modify the physique of equine populations in spite of the wishes of their human owners. Swart makes the same point, noting that in sub-Saharan Africa Arabian and Barb horses, similar to the ones that flourished in western Europe, suffered badly. While they might survive in areas of savannah, tsetse fly infestation of the interior- and coastal-marshes decimated them. Even so, dwarf horses, perhaps the size of Shetland ponies, lived in the forests of West

and Central Africa, their stature, as in the Philippines, representing a response to the sparseness of the fodder available. They also seem to have acquired a partial immunity to the trypanosomes carried by the tsetse fly.

Andrea Tonni's essay provides an illustration of the process of equine migration, whereby fine horses became objects of diplomacy as well as trade. His study of the Gonzagan studs in Mantua looks at the sources of supply, the breeding regime in the studs and the subsequent distribution of the progeny around Europe. Reputedly the finest in Europe, the fame of the studs rested on the regular infusion of the blood of horses from the Ottoman Empire. Italian princes, like the Gonzagas, with their established trading links, thereby provided an essential service for the monarchs of western Europe, who, as potential, if not actual, enemies often found the Sultan unwilling to sell them such a vital military-related commodity. Henry VIII was merely one monarch, who obtained horses from Mantua. Francis I of France, whose rivalry with Henry was conducted on a personal as well as a national level, was another. As Edwards argues, when the two monarchs met on the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 the discourse concerning the quality of their horses and their prowess in horsemanship ran parallel to the diplomatic negotiations. The French king won on points; both monarchs had sent their agents to Italy and Spain but crucially Francis had secured the best specimens from the Mantuan studs. Eye-witness accounts emphasize the beauty of the horses, which included Neapolitan coursers, Spanish ginetes and a bay horse of the Duke of Termini's stud, as well as fine horses from Mantua.

Richard Nash adds a twist to the debate over blood and environment with his case study of the pedigree of the Byerley Turk, one of the three thoroughbred foundation stallions. From the mid 1690s the horse was covering mares, probably at the Goldsborough Hall stud in the West Riding of Yorkshire. If, as Nash argues in his essay, the stallion was home-bred, the country was already capable of producing sires of racehorses of the highest quality. Even if imported, his career indicates that these exotic creatures had acclimatised. As Edwards points out, desert Arabians grew in stature in England, partly as a result of cross-breeding but also on account of the better fodder they received. Nash's essay is a detective story, built on a framework of hard facts with an infilling of plausible conjecture intelligently handled. Even this is only possible because the Byerley Turk was a sire of racehorses and therefore better documented than horses carrying out other functions. The

racecourse test, the sole criterion of performance, meant that owners and punters needed to know the identity of individual horses as a guide to betting and breeding. The existence of a relatively small group of racehorse owners and breeders, many of whom operated in a particular part of the country, also aided Nash's quest. Emphasis on blood and selective breeding, allied to the keeping of careful records, had a beneficial effect on breeding standards in general. Naturally, the upper classes, with their higher standards and specialised horses, were the ones who most readily maintained detailed records but over time farmers and other horse keepers – men like Robert Bakewell – must have recognised the advantages of a more systematic approach.

Edwards, Nash and Tonni deal with the breeding practices of the time. Tonni's account is the most detailed, revealing the way in which the Gonzagas organised their studs and the policies they adopted there. The family maintained a number of centres, each of which specialised in the production of a different type of horse. The family used coursers for war and for state occasions; Turks, Barbs and hobbies for racing; and Spanish ginetes for the saddle. They also bred draught horses: the Villana breed for farm-work and the Virgiliana breed for pulling the vehicles which transported courtiers and their impedimenta from one place to another. Barbs were the most favoured on account of their success as *palio* horses. An interesting aspect of the Gonzagan breeding regime involved these Barbs, some of which remained pure in order to retain the original gene pool, while others were crossed with Turcomans or perhaps hobbies to produce even faster *palio* horses. Edwards, in passing, looks at the landscape of horse-breeding. Typically, the horses were kept in a series of paddocks with brood mares segregated from the rest of the animals in order to avoid injury or miscarriage. Nash's argument depends upon an understanding of the fundamentals of horse-breeding, notably the length of the gestation period, the time of foaling and the maturation process of a late seventeenth century colt, as well as breeding conventions, a knowledge of equine and human genealogies, an awareness of linkages between the persons involved and a prediction of their likely actions.

Sick horses were a matter of constant concern to their owners, reflected in the numerous references to illness and injury in early modern records. Periodically, epidemics swept the country.³² As the upper classes had servants to look after their horses and farriers to call

³² Edwards, *Horse and Man* 66.

upon if the animals felt off-colour, how much more of a problem was it for the bulk of the horse-keeping population? If they could afford it, they might hire the services of a horse leech but most of them had to make do with whatever knowledge they had gained themselves, perhaps augmented by the information contained the cheaper books on farriery. The writers of some of these manuals avowedly aimed at the public at large; they included the author of *The English farrier or countrymans treasure* (1636), who claimed that his remedies would cure all 'Diseases, hurts, maymes, maladies and griefes in Horses' and would benefit 'Gentlemen, Farmers, Inholders, Husbandmen, and generally for all'. Even so, MacKay's research indicates that most of the specialist books were directed at gentlemen. The purchase price alone, between 2s. and 3s. 6d., would have sufficed to exclude the bulk of the population.³³

Because of the iconic and functional value of horses not surprisingly owners wanted to keep them in good health. For a carrier, whose livelihood depended upon the fitness of his horse, it was more important than it was for a gentleman with his string of valuable horses in the stables, even if individually the latter were far more expensive animals. Unfortunately, small-scale carriers, farmers and the like did not leave documentation behind them. Inevitably, we know far more about the treatment of horses on large estates because of the survival of estate archives with their accounts, commonplace books and correspondence. For minor ailments and scrapes the stud or stable master would supervise the treatment but for serious illness or injury a farrier attended the horse. On large estates owners might employ a full-time farrier but generally they sought their skills as and when required. Edwards's essay confirms Louise Curth's contention that these horse doctors, whether farriers or horse leeches, performed better than their lowly reputation warranted. She suggests that the exclusive Farriers Company of London was partly to blame for their reputation, fearing a threat to their monopoly, but no doubt some of them were poor and damaged their charges. Horse dealing, as a profession, suffered in the same way. According to Curth, some farriers were literate and could potentially draw on the advice presented in the manuals but, if not, they possessed practical knowledge and a rudimentary understanding of business practices. Many of the ones whom large landowners hired must have impressed them as they were given regular employment or,

³³ MacKay, "Horse Medicine" 30–31.

if another gentleman inquired about a farrier, provided a good reference. Amanda Eisemann's essay, which focuses on the work of farriers in the north German duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, offers a continental comparison. There, the farriers were much better organised. Instead of a single, highly exclusive metropolitan company, which left the vast majority of farriers and assorted horse doctors out on their own, as in England, they were members of thriving urban and village guilds and were able to exercise considerable authority.

Curth points out in her essay that the treatment for horses, as for humans, was based on the Galenic theory of the four humours, an indication of the abiding influence of Classical authors on European thought and practice. Colour, the Ancients had stated, was a good indicator of health and humoral condition and, as a result, the advice that early modern writers gave was couched in the same terms. As Morgan wrote in 1609, 'The ancient writers tel vs that euerie horse is coloured as he is complexioned, & according to complexion he is good or euil conditioned, and as he doth participate of the Elements, so hee is complexioned [...]'.³⁴ As diagnosis was based upon humoral imbalance, horse doctors became expert at bleeding, purging and administering poultices and, in doing so, acquired a working knowledge of the composition and dosages of specific remedies. In a letter that Sir John Gell of Hopton Hall wrote to his son, John, on 10 February 1662/3 he praised the work of the farrier, whose skill had saved a number of horses sick with the 'plague'. He quoted the farrier's advice.³⁵

[...] no one medison will doe good to all if the[y] tremble & quake in theyre hinder partes letting of them blood in the Dock help the quaking/ but not saue the life/if any horse fale ill, stoperill him as you doe a horse in the forehead for the stagars/but this must bee beloe in the forbootes or neare vnto them/it will roone & stinke very much.

Many gentlemen took an interest in horse medicine, reading the manuals, swapping remedies among one another and assisting at the treatment.³⁶ John Gell junior, noted above, was one who kept remedies for horse complaints, including a recipe written in about 1680 for curing scouring and the staggers.³⁷

³⁴ Morgan, *Perfection of Horse-manship* 23.

³⁵ Derbyshire Record Office, Chandos-Pole-Gell MSS, D 258/Box 29/44b.

³⁶ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 63–65.

³⁷ Derbyshire Record Office, Chandos-Pole-Gell MSS, D 258/Box 48/15.

Horse-Human Identities

In many respects the themes discussed here overlap with those dealt with in the section on the relationship between horsemanship and status. What distinguishes them is their angle of approach. The first section focuses on the acquisition of riding skills and the public performance of them, as well as the outward demonstration of aristocratic wealth and status. In a sense the spectacle did help to establish the rider's identity but identity is not the same thing as status: on the one hand it is a more personal construct but on the other it expresses the fundamental nature of existence, whether of a horse, a human being or even a nation. Flaherty's essay, for instance, provides a good example of the distinction. Basing her account on the quote, 'know us by our horses', a line in Shakespeare's, *Henry IV, Part 1*, she not only discusses the link between horses and status but offers insights into the human condition as well. This section also looks at the horse's identity from the animal's point of view, notably in relation to the question of agency.

Horses enjoyed a close relationship with people but it was one based on human superiority. If early modern society believed that its dominion over the natural world was God-given, Classical philosophers had thought the same. Aristotle argued in his theory of the three souls that in comparison with plants and creatures only man possessed a rational soul. Medieval scholastics developed this premise in the concept of the Great Chain of Being, a continuum of living organisms from the simplest to the most complex. As Edwards argues, contemporaries placed horses at the upper end of the scale, probably immediately below humans. Writing in c. 1683, Thomas Tryon declared that, 'An Horse is a very excellent Creature for Shape and Beauty, for Strength, for Swiftnes and for its great and general Use'.³⁸ To these aesthetic and utilitarian values, some added the ability to reason. As the capacity for rational thought, together with language and the possession of a soul, distinguished humans from animals, many people at the time were reluctant to accept the blurring of the boundary between them. Descartes expressed the traditional view most forcibly in his notion of the beast-machine, which he put forward in his influential

³⁸ Physiologus Philotheos, *The country-mans companion* (London, Andrew Sowle: 1684) 1.

Discourse on Method (1637). The arrival of Oriental horses in western Europe materially affected attitudes towards equine capabilities, strengthening the argument of the pro-animal lobby. Apart from their beauty, contemporaries remarked on their nobility and intelligence. They appeared as rational creatures, the embodiment of Swift's *houyhnhnms*, and therefore had to be treated with respect rather than being beaten into submission.³⁹

Those writers, who accepted equine intelligence, still distinguished between it and human intelligence. Nonetheless, the thought that one was dealing with a rational creature must have affected the way that people treated horses. The manuals on horsemanship, in fact, reflect the movement away from the harsh approach to training of the sort that prevailed in the early sixteenth century to a greater emphasis on coaxing and cherishing. Traditionally, scholars have attributed this shift to a reaction to the brutal regime of the celebrated riding master, Grisone. Tobey's study of Grisone offers a corrective to this view. She argues that he only used harsh methods as a last resort and that most of the passages, in which he discussed cruel treatment of horses, were descriptions of the measures deployed by riding masters who were ignorant of his rules. In this respect, Blundeville, writing in the 1560s and heavily influenced by Grisone, was following his mentor's precepts. Thus, Blundeville stressed the importance of gentleness from the outset, pointing out the need to accustom young horses to quiet handling before attempting to ride them and then to encourage them to come to the mounting block. However, should this fail, he advocated Grisone's method of last resort, namely, that the rider should 'beat him your self with good stick upon the head between the ears'. When the horse obeyed, though, the rider should 'make much of him'.⁴⁰

Walker's essay, which examines the training regime advocated by Newcastle in the middle of the following century, moves the debate forward. She argues that his systematic and equine-centred approach marked a qualitative advance in training methods, one which, though located on a 'through-line in the development of ideas', was nonetheless innovative. Newcastle pointed out that, as the horse was more powerful than the rider-trainer, the latter had to gain obedience in a way that

³⁹ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 31; Landry D., "The Bloody Shouldered Arabian and early modern English culture", *Criticism* 46 (2004) 59.

⁴⁰ Blundeville Thomas, *The fower chiefyst offices belongyng to Horsemanship* (London, William Seres: 1565) 4.

worked in harmony with the animal's mind and instinct rather than through violence. The rider had to gain the trust and respect of the horse, a sentient and thinking creature, through firm but careful and dispassionate application of 'force', that is strength of will. The animal would instinctively respond more readily to confident leadership than bullying. However, despite the literature clearly advocating the value of a more thoughtful approach, Edwards asks, was there a gap between theory and practice? Working horses kept by the general public suffered the most, not because ploughmen, carters and carriers did not recognize their charges' mental capacity but rather because of the pressure to get jobs done and to extract the maximum amount of work from a major capital asset. The elite, who had read the manuals, seem to have accepted their advice and if, like Newcastle, they trained their own horses, they tended to act accordingly. Leading trainers also had digested the advice. In certain circumstances, however, even noblemen abused their horses and several writers showed concern that violent methods simply revealed a man's own beast-like nature.

Contemporary writers, when listing the attributes of horses, often discussed their qualities in relation to those possessed by other animals and even by humans. As Edwards has written elsewhere, the evidence they present suggests that horses possessed a number of traits particularly associated with mankind: 'nobility of mind, loyalty, faithfulness, pride, courage, a desire to please and even intelligence'.⁴¹ Indeed, members of the elite not uncommonly wrote about a favourite saddle horse in anthropomorphic terms. Edward Lord Herbert, for instance, recalled with affection a dead horse, who had pined away in his absence, and in terms that one would use when losing a human friend.⁴² Literary works similarly imbued horses with human qualities. As Flaherty points out in her essay, Richard II's horse, Roan Barbary, was perceptive enough to discern the transfer of power from his master to Bolingbroke. Later, Jonathan Swift in his satire, *Gulliver's Travels*, chose horses to represent a race of intelligent creatures when he wanted to point out the beastly side of human nature. A mere literary device, perhaps, but it is significant that horses were the selected model.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 24.

⁴² Ibid.

The reverse was also true: horses helped humans construct an identity either by engaging in equine pursuits or by association with the perceived characteristics of the animal. Socolow quotes Sir Philip Sidney as admitting that his riding master, Pugliano, might have persuaded him to wish that he had been a horse.⁴³ Sidney admired horses for their noble qualities and, as Socolow emphasizes, for the role they played in self-fashioning, that is, to act in a manly and virtuous way. For Sidney, only poetry surpassed horsemanship as a means of acquiring *vertu*. Moreover, while Sidney accepted the symbolic importance of the *manège* as a means of acquiring and displaying *vertu*, he did not reject the traditional military-based version, even if, as a cavalry officer, he had discarded heavy plated armour and the lance. Edwards also argues that horses helped the elite project the sought-after image inwardly onto themselves as well as outwardly onto others in public. The iconography of the equestrian portrait, one could argue, was as much aimed at the sitter as at the public.

The middling orders also utilised the iconic and status-enhancing qualities of horses to improve their individual or group identity, as well as their economic standing. Eisemann, in her essay, illustrates the point. Beginning in the late sixteenth century, large-smiths' guilds in the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg started to adopt the symbol of the horse as the primary signifier of their trade. By identifying themselves with such a potent iconic creature they were able to improve their status and feeling of self-worth. In some centres during the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, smiths, identified with horse-related work, especially farriery, broke away from the more general smith guilds. Where they chose to stay, they tended to form a medical sub-group and strove to dominate the guilds' activities.

When Flaherty discusses the association between horses and war in the *Henriad*, she reminds us of the early modern identification of horsemanship with masculinity. Women rode and hunted – some sat astride their horse – but mainly they progressed sedately by side-saddle or perched behind a man on a 'double' horse. Warfare dominates the *Henriad* but, as Flaherty indicates, Shakespeare juxtaposed the two spheres, the battlefield and the bedchamber, in order to emphasize contrasting gender roles. Hotspur, the archetypal warrior, rejected home-life in favour of his warhorse, declaring that his horse should be

⁴³ Stewart, *Sidney* 132.

his throne. When his wife asks him if he loves her, he replies, 'Come, wilt thou see me ride?/And when I am a-horseback, I will swear/ I love thee infinitely'. Henry V is equally ill-at-ease when attempting to woo the French princess, Katharine, and has to resort to the same cavalry metaphor. Was Shakespeare illustrating the brutalising effect of war on human relations and, as Boehrer argues, satirising the antiquated code of conduct followed by the old nobility? Conversely, was he defining the nature of gender relations at the time, the riding trope epitomising the link between sex and power, with men 'on top'? Hotspur's preference for horses and the masculine pursuits that involved them was not unusual. Stone cites an old French proverb, 'Rich is the man whose wife is dead, and the horse alive'.⁴⁴ The middling orders, as depicted by Eisemann's equine-based tradesmen in the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg, also equated horses with masculinity. Newcastle went further, using riding as an analogy for human relationships in general. Walker points out that he thought that the way a riding master trained and managed a horse was akin to man's relationship with God and, by extension, a monarch's relationship with his subjects and a teacher's relationship with a pupil.

The geohumoral theory, current at the time, linked horse and human identities together through the impact that shared environmental influences had on both species. However, the importation of foreign horses during the course of the period complicated the picture, raising questions about the transmission or adoption of environmentally related traits. On the other hand, it allowed humans a wider choice when they sought to associate themselves with perceived equine attributes. By the middle of the eighteenth century the thoroughbred, a breed that owed its existence to the most exotic of imports, had become Anglicized. Indeed, as a cross between native and Oriental stock, it defined Englishness, an idealized view of the nation's inhabitants, perhaps a subconscious reflection of their joint hybrid origins.⁴⁵ Thoroughbreds improved the speed of racing and, as noted above, when crossed with other breeds, the quality of hunters and cavalry horses. To cope, Donna Landry has argued, riders adopted the Ottoman custom of riding short on a lightweight saddle with loose reins

⁴⁴ Stone L., *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (London: 1977) 103. I am grateful to Joan Thirsk for this reference.

⁴⁵ Landry D., "The Bloody Shouldered Arabian and Early Modern English Culture", *Criticism* 46, 1 (2004) 59–63; Edwards, *Horse and Man* 117.

and a snaffle bit. The synergic relationship which this practice encouraged benefited both horse and rider.⁴⁶

Although the volume in general adopts an anthropocentric stance, it does not ignore the issue of equine agency. Some horses did not succumb quietly to the dictates of their masters. They refused the saddle and proved difficult to train; they threw their riders or dislodged them by rolling over or shunting them into an obstacle; they bit, kicked or knocked aside anyone who came within their reach; they refused to move or turn in a particular direction; they made their own decision about what constituted a danger and certainly did not throw themselves onto a row of pikes in battle; they engaged in unregulated sex on commons and wastes and, even if penned in, barged through hedges or jumped fences to impregnate a mare in season. Horses also acquired a greater degree of agency than other domesticated (non-pet) animals because, along with hounds, they were the only ones identified as individuals and given names.⁴⁷ For the upper classes, the image projected by their horses was as important as function – indeed, image was a function – and, therefore, as Edwards shows, they were treated very well. Owners modified the landscape to accommodate them and servants catered for their daily requirements. When they fell sick or suffered an injury, farriers tended them. However, as Edwards concludes, it was a conditional agency, valid only so long as the horses displayed those qualities that gave them the agency in the first place.

⁴⁶ Landry D., “Learning to Ride in Early Modern Britain, or, The Making of the English Hunting Seat”, in Raber – Tucker (eds.), *Culture of the Horse* 329–349.

⁴⁷ Some cows were given names.

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I. HORSEMANSHIP AND STATUS

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE'S 'LOVE [...] FOR GOOD HORSES':
AN EXPLORATION OF MEANINGS

Elsbeth Graham

The life of William Cavendish, first Earl, Marquis and ultimately Duke of Newcastle, is intimately bound up with the big story of the seventeenth century: the violently negotiated changes in structures of power that constituted the Civil War, and the ensuing Commonwealth and Restoration. As a grandson of Bess of Hardwick and son of Sir Charles Cavendish, he was born into a family with court associations and he himself, as a young man, 'long[ed] to be a serious player at court'.¹ After studying (rather unsuccessfully) at Cambridge, he had entered the Royal Mews where he was trained, along with Prince Henry, in the art of the *manège* by the French master, Monsieur St Antoine. His talent for, and expertise in, horsemanship, along with his intellectual, artistic and literary passions were, from this point onwards, integrated with his courtly ambitions, becoming as definitive of him as a significant royalist figure as his prominent role in the Civil War. As well as being a prolific playwright, poet and musician himself, and facilitator of familial literary production, he was an important patron of Ben Jonson and James Shirley and an art collector, especially of paintings by Antwerp artists such as Van Dyck and Alexander Keirinx. (When, in his quest for court favour, he received Charles I in 1633 and again in 1634 in his main residences, it was Jonson who produced masques as centrepieces to the lavish entertainments: *The King's Entertainment at Welbeck* in 1633 and *Love's Welcome at Bolsover* in 1634.) In 1638 his desire for a court appointment was fulfilled: he became the governor of Prince Charles. Subsequently, during the Civil War he served as Commander-in-Chief of Charles I's Northern Army, campaigning for his monarch (with mixed fortunes) until his defeat at Marston Moor in 1644. After this, he went into exile in France and then to Antwerp

¹ Worsley L., *Cavalier. The Story of a Seventeenth-Century Playboy* (London: 2007) 4.

until the Restoration in 1660.² While in Antwerp, during a particularly low point in his period of exile, he occupied himself with his horses and horsemanship displays, and wrote and published *La Méthode Nouvelle et Invention Extraordinaire de Dresser les Chevaux* (1657–8). This included Petr Clouvet's copperplate engravings based on a series of etchings made by Abraham van Diepenbeke, a former pupil and assistant of Rubens, who had produced (family and horse) portraits for Newcastle in pre-Civil War England. Van Diepenbeke continued to work in close collaboration with Newcastle and his wife, Margaret Cavendish, during their exile, providing illustrations for many of their books. After the Restoration, another version of *La Méthode Nouvelle*, with the same title in translation (*A New Method and Extraordinary Invention to Dress Horses*), but with its content altered from the original, and without its illustrative plates, was published in London in 1667. In the eighteenth century, descendants of Newcastle, in collaboration with the London printer, John Brindley, produced a version comprising a precise translation of the earlier French text (without its prefatory material) and illustrations made from the original engraved plates. This was published as part of a two-volume collection, entitled *A General System of Horsemanship* which also included a French veterinary text.³

My essay here focuses mainly on this version (referenced to a modern edition excluding material not by Newcastle), which makes accessible an English written text, along with the original illustrations, since both written and visual elements of the text are crucial to my concerns. My aim is to unpick the meanings of the aesthetic that shapes Newcastle's horsemanship books. In doing this I explore some emotional and psychic structures that inhere in a series of forms and cultural trends (the *manège* itself; descendant forms of horse performance; and the baroque as a broad aesthetic tradition). At the same time, in considering ways in which Newcastle's life trajectory may have produced

² For biographical accounts see: Trease G., *Portrait of a Cavalier. William Cavendish, First Duke of Newcastle* (London: 1979); Hulse L., "Cavendish, William, first duke of Newcastle upon Tyne (bap. 1593, d. 1676)", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford: 2004); online edn., ed. L. Goldman, May 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4946> (accessed 29.12.10); Worsley, *Cavalier*.

³ Cavendish William, Duke of Newcastle, *A General System of Horsemanship*, facsimile reproduction of Newcastle's text from the 1743 edn., intro. W.C. Steinkraus, with a technical commentary by E. Schmit-Jensen (Vermont: 2000).

his particular investment in such aesthetics, I return issues of emotion and the psychic to a political sphere, suggesting ways in which Newcastle's particular negotiations of royalist values might be seen to be produced and reproduced through the informing aesthetic of his practices of, and writings on, horsemanship.

Ideology and Desire

That horse-related texts in general, and Newcastle's texts in particular, reveal ideas and values associated with social rank and political allegiances is routinely accepted (as many of the essays in this book attest). In her agenda-setting analysis of Newcastle's horse texts, "Reasonable Creatures": William Cavendish and the Art of Dressage", for instance, Karen Raber, states this directly: '[...] the skill a rider demonstrated in horsemanship could instantly and efficiently indicate nuances of his educational background, political sympathies, and temperament to any observer'.⁴ Her essay goes on to examine Newcastle's horsemanship treatises as 'one locus where the horse's ideological significance is most prominently and complexly explored'.⁵ And as Kate van Orden has shown, the early-modern *manège* was always, 'a moral practice and a political practice'.⁶ But, although an ultimate concern of this essay is similarly with systems of ideas, values and political meanings, where I want to start is with the simple proposition that Newcastle loved horses. Margaret Cavendish tells us this in her biography of her husband, *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince William Cavendishe*, when she writes that he 'took [...] much delight

⁴ Raber K.L., "Reasonable Creatures": William Cavendish and the Art of Dressage", in Fumerton P. – Hunt S. (eds.), *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* (Philadelphia: 1999) 42. See also Raber K., "A Horse of a Different Color. Nation and Race in Early Modern Horsemanship Treatises", in Raber K. – Tucker T.J. (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse. Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York – Basingstoke: 2005), esp. 225–226 on the political impulse behind Newcastle's horsemanship texts. Tucker T.J., "Early Modern French Noble Identity and the Equestrian 'Airs above the Ground'", in Raber – Tucker (eds.), *Culture of the Horse* 274, shows how 'horsemanship played a key role in the realm of shifting ideas about noble identity'. There was, of course, a strong French influence on Newcastle's work.

⁵ Raber, "Reasonable Creatures" 42.

⁶ Van Orden K., "From *Gens d'Armes* to *Gentilshommes*: Dressage, Civility, and the Ballet à Cheval", in Raber – Tucker (eds.), *Culture of the Horse* 199.

and pleasure' in his horses and was attached to them as individuals.⁷ Indeed, she relates that, on one occasion during their time in Antwerp, he was displeased to hear of a potential buyer for one of them, 'So great a Love hath my lord for good horses'. She continues: 'And certainly I have observed, and do verily believe, that some of them also had a particular Love to my Lord; for they seemed to rejoyce whensoever he came into the Stables, by their trampling action, and the noise they made [...]'.⁸

Although we, today, may not agree with her precise understanding of horse behaviour, nor immediately accept this notion of a reciprocal, interspecies love, Margaret Cavendish's description reveals the idea of Newcastle's particular affinity with horses as having currency within their own married relationship and household, and as significant to his self-image. Certainly, it is possible to see this affective bond between Newcastle and his horses as being implicit in his writings. He opens his 'Introduction' to *A General System of Horsemanship* with the paradox: 'The understanding of a horse is infinitely degraded below that of a man by several, who notwithstanding, by their actions, shew, that they believe the horse to be the more intelligent of the two'.⁹ And he asserts there is no such thing as a bad horse: '[...] there are some who say, this is a good horse, and that is a jade; in which they are much mistaken, for there is no such thing in the world like to what they call a jade: it is altogether the ignorance of the horseman who makes jades, and not nature [...]'.¹⁰ He repeatedly speaks of 'cherishing' the horse¹¹

⁷ Cavendish Margaret, *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince Williame Cavendishe* (London: 1667) 65. Cf. Cavendish W., *General System of Horsemanship* 17: 'horses perform according to their different genius and disposition'.

⁸ Cavendish, *Life* 67. Although this suggests that the horses accepted Newcastle and recognised him positively, Margaret Cavendish's description, in terms of modern understanding of horse behaviour, implies that they were demanding his attention, rather than applauding his entrance or expressing their joy at seeing him.

⁹ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 11.

¹⁰ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 17.

¹¹ In this Newcastle is aligning himself with a particular tradition of describing the desirable relationship with a horse as being one of cherishing. See: Astley John, *The Art of Riding* (London, Henry Denham: 1584) 12–19; Blundeville John, *The Arte of Rydyng* (London, Willyam Seres: 1561?) chapter 4, no pagination; Blundeville John, *The Fower Chiefyst Offices belongyng to Horsemanshippe* (London, William Seres: 1565) fols. 30v–31v; Browne William, *Browne his fiftie years practice* (London, John Piper: 1624) 2–3; Corte Claudio, *The Art of Riding*, transl. Thomas Bedingfield (London, Henry Denham: 1584) 112.

and defends the horse's intelligence, rationality and nobility.¹² Throughout *A General System of Horsemanship* he brings out the full meaning of the horse-riding term 'aids' (referring to the rider's legs, seat, hand and voice and tools such as whip and spurs) by emphasizing their use as 'helps', which are never to be applied punitively or coercively.¹³ He likens training horses to teaching children.¹⁴ But more than just through this explicitly-articulated, humane – even, as Raber points out, humanising – approach, his love of horses is suggested by the subtle saturation of the whole text with understanding of how horses function, their way of perceiving and how rider and horse work together and interact. His understanding, and what we might perceive as his love, of horses are, in brief, implicit in every detail of his method of training.¹⁵ So, a sense of *A General System of Horsemanship*'s deep structure of personal, interspecies feeling leads me to dig beneath Raber's identification of ideological meanings to the affective undercurrents of the text. In the 1980s Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse suggested that early modern conduct manuals – a different, but related, form of treatise to equestrian manuals – constituted a history of desire. They then argued: 'expressions of desire in fact constitute ideology in its most basic and powerful form [...] one that culture designates as nature itself'.¹⁶ They looked for the ideology behind what appeared natural: desire. But perhaps a reversal of their interpretative strategy might reveal how recognisably ideological thought, such as Newcastle's horsemanship writing, is shaped by desire.

¹² Inscription on Fig. 1 above, and Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 11–14.

¹³ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 49, 65, 66 and passim.

¹⁴ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 15–19.

¹⁵ On issues of cruelty to horses sometimes perceived as being implied by Newcastle's use of the words 'fear' or 'afraid' in the human-horse relationship, as in Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 142, see Elaine Walker's essay in this collection with which I agree. 'Fear' of the horse for a horseman carries the same sense as, for instance, '*Of a childes feare of his parent*. To the aforementioned dutie of love, must feare be added, which is a childes awfull respect of his parent'. Gouge, William, *Of domesticall duties eight treatises* (London, printed by John Haviland for William Bladen, St Paul's: 1622), Treatise 5, Section 3, 430.

¹⁶ Armstrong N. – Tennenhouse L. (eds.), *The Ideology of Conduct. Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality* (London: 1987) 2.



Fig. 1. "Après l'homme le Cheval le plus noble animal". From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) vol. I, plate 2. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.

A Compensatory Activity: Civil War and Exile

In particular, this seems to be a way into exploring the idea that horsemanship, which had been central to Newcastle's life and role in the court and army of Charles I, was reconfigured as a compensatory activity during his years of exile and into his old age in England. It served to occupy him, to shore up his identity, to mark out a transformed version of his aristocratic role and, it can be argued, provide an arena in which he sought to heal his emotional or psychological wounds. If Newcastle always loved horses, and they were central to his identity and courtly role, they also were implicated in his management of feelings of humiliation, loss and displacement, in his attempts to roll with the punches in times of exile, hardship, dislocation and frustration. (Margaret Cavendish describes his counsel to her of the importance of emotional self-management, the wisdom of abating one's passions and reacting in stormy times, 'like experienced Sea-men [...] as they either turn their Sails with the wind, or take them down'.¹⁷ His work with horses – riding exhibitions, refining and writing about his *manège* techniques – has a socio-political and economic function, maintaining his presence in continental aristocratic circles and providing an income. But it also represents a constant return to the triumphs and failures of his pre-exile role and identity. If the high points had been his acquisition of the role of governor to Prince Charles and early Civil War victories, the lowest point, clearly, was his defeat at Marston Moor, the most crushing Royalist defeat of the Civil War, where all but thirty of the 4,000 soldiers in Newcastle's Whitecoat army died.¹⁸ Certainly, he received much mockery and vituperative criticism (from both Royalists and Parliamentarians) for this – and it was his role here that precipitated his departure into exile. Tellingly, Newcastle reputedly commented, almost immediately after the battle, 'I will go into Holland [...] I will not endure the laughter of the Court'.¹⁹ And since his arrival on the continent was almost immediately followed by the surrender of his main estates, Welbeck and Bolsover, to parliamen-

¹⁷ Cavendish, *Life* 184.

¹⁸ For accounts of the Battle of Marston Moor and Newcastle's role, see Trease, *Portrait of a Cavalier* 132–145; Purkiss D., *The English Civil War. A People's History* (London – New York – Toronto – Sydney: 2006) 327–339; Wanklyn M. – Jones F., *A Military History of the English Civil War* (Harlow: 2005) 184–189; Newman P., *The Battle of Marston Moor 1644* (Chichester: 1981) 47–55.

¹⁹ Warburton E. (ed.), *Memoirs and Correspondence of Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers* (London: 1849) vol. II, 468.

tarian troops, his sense of identity – with its characteristically aristocratic predication on reputation, wealth, display, land ownership and lavishly built and decorated residences – was under threat from all angles.²⁰ The compensatory reprises of his previous achievements, and the attempt to manage the sense of humiliation, trauma and failure that might be seen in his post-Marston Moor work in horse management, are suggested both by the direct referencing of the Civil War in the illustrations to *La Méthode Nouvelle* and *A General System of Horsemanship* (as in Fig. 1, showing the materials of war surrounding the plinth from which he and his horse arise heavenwards in a courbette à gauche, in the engraved likeness of a living statue) and by the texts' less explicit, but equally striking, visual and verbal magnification and theatricalisation of those core values that had been embodied in his conduct and performance as a royalist commander.

The famous contemporary story that Newcastle lost the Battle of Marston Moor because he had 'sneaked off to his coach for a quiet smoke', although suggesting something of his reputation as a hedonistic dilettante, is clearly not true.²¹ Modern accounts, while repeating the anecdote, acknowledge that misunderstanding and faulty communication between Newcastle and Rupert, exacerbated by differences in temperament and tactical approach, contributed to the defeat. However his military practice is assessed, Newcastle certainly subscribed to traditional values: belief in chivalric codes of honour and in achievement of heroism through battle. Such values are encapsulated in the particular episode of his propaganda skirmish with the parliamentary general, Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax, who, in 1642, had submitted a warrant against Newcastle to be published by one of the high constables of Yorkshire, accusing him of having 'raised a great Army of Papists' and invading the county. In his response, Newcastle made a call to trial by personal combat (or more precisely, created a wittily disingenuous pretence that Fairfax had actually meant to issue a personal challenge in his 'Warrant'):

²⁰ On early-modern courtiers and self-promoting modes, see Whigham F., *Ambition and Privilege. The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 1984).

²¹ The phrase is from Purkiss 330; cf. Trease 99. The story is originally taken from Bodleian Library, Clarendon MS 23, fol. 230r, *Notes on Events in the North*, and is repeated in most modern accounts, although Newcastle's defeat is not attributed to his going for a smoke.

Withall, his Lordship talks of driving me and mine Army out of the County [Yorkshire]; he knows this cannot be done without a meeting. If it be not a flourish, but a true spark of undissembled Gallantry, he may do well to expresse himself more particularly for time and place. This is more conformable to the Examples of our Heroicke Ancestors, who used not to spend their time in scratching one another out of holes, but [who] in pitched Fields determined their doubts. This would quickly set a period to the sufferings of the People [...].²²

For Keith Thomas this indicates that, 'Newcastle was a dinosaur', looking back to personal challenges, the ideals of the tournament or joust, and battle as a 'theatre of honour' where aspiring courtiers, following Castiglione's advice, should ensure that their bravery (a word signifying both courage and ostentatious clothing) should 'be witnessed by influential persons'.²³ But while it is evident that honour, chivalric codes and belief in the system of allegiances, patronage, reward and favour of the court (necessary to 'a monarchy without a fully salaried bureaucracy')²⁴ do indeed form Newcastle's core beliefs, it might at the same time be recognised that his values are more nuanced and complex – and that the implicit opposition of modern, scientific Parliamentarian against old-fashioned, chivalric Royalist, is less simple – than this implies. Layers of generational, political, religious, social, ethical, temperamental and aesthetic values are all being quite consciously negotiated here.

As J.S.A. Adamson has shown, chivalric values were not confined to the royalist side.²⁵ The parliamentarian, Sir William Waller, for instance, had a 'tree of chivalry' hung with a fleur-de-lys as his military emblem, invoking both an actual ancestor's role alongside Henry V at Agincourt and the hero of a chivalric romance, the 'Knight of the Flower de-Luce'.²⁶ Similarly, both parties in the Newcastle-Fairfax

²² Cavendish William, Duke of Newcastle, *An Answer of the Right Honourable Earle of New-Castle His Excellency, &c. To the six groundless aspersions cast upon him by the Lord Fairefax, in his late Warrant (here inserted) [...]* (Printed at Oxford and Reprinted at Shrewsbury: 1642) 11.

²³ Thomas K., *The Ends of Life. Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford: 2009) 61–62.

²⁴ Butler M., "Ben Jonson and the Limits of Courtly Panegyric", in Sharpe K. – Lake P. (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Basingstoke – London: 1994) 91–115 at 91.

²⁵ Adamson J.S.A., "Chivalry and Political Culture in Caroline England", in Sharpe – Lake (eds.), *Culture and Politics* 161–197. Cf. Thomas, *Ends of Life* 62.

²⁶ Adamson, "Chivalry and Political Culture" 185.

battle of words use a shared frame of reference; a cultural commonality intersects their political and military opposition. Fairfax's response to Newcastle's call to trial by individual combat is precisely expressed in terms of chivalric romance, producing cultural accord in spite of the overt rejection of Newcastle's courtly values: he, Fairfax, would fight a war 'without following the rules of Amadis de Gaule or the Knight of the Sun'. Again as Adamson points out, this reply, 'is almost a direct quotation of Lovel's comment on the virtuous Lord Beaumont's studies in Ben Jonson's *The New Inn* (1631)'.²⁷ Since Newcastle had been a friend as well as patron to Ben Jonson in the 1630s, Fairfax's riposte takes, at least in part, the form of a repartee to Newcastle's own wit, and is based on intimacy of knowledge; its antagonism to Newcastle is framed as an aesthetic difference, marked out within the parameters of a broader cultural bond.

The meanings of this episode are multiplied by the fact that this cultural bond and a social connection between Newcastle and the Fairfaxes occurs across several generations of Fairfaxes. In the decades before the Civil War, Newcastle had had a friendly relationship, based on patronage and a shared passion for horses and horse breeding, with Ferdinando Fairfax's father, Thomas, Lord Fairfax. In 1633/4, for instance, the elder Thomas Fairfax had written to Newcastle, 'impartynge his purpose of veseling' to Newcastle before entering into an exchange of horse-related news. In this letter, oscillating between obsequiousness, aristocratic name-dropping and gossip reference to their shared equine interest, Fairfax refers to a comment by Newcastle, relayed to him by Lord Clifford, that his 'stable is 'not so compleate as it hath beene'; asks Newcastle about 'those colts of your Barbarie which I sent to you'; and offers a choice from 'some faire colts' he had 'bred forth of my lord of Noridge his dun horse'.²⁸ And the mix of issues of inter-rank relationship, favour, common concern and courteous relationship that appears in correspondence such as this²⁹ is reproduced throughout the Newcastle-Fairfax honour-battle, informing its final 1643 episode when, in the course of the parliamentary

²⁷ Adamson, "Chivalry and Political Culture" 185.

²⁸ Fairfax to Earl of Newcastle, 24 Jan 1633/4 (British Library, Add MS 70499, fol. 170).

²⁹ For the complexities of inter-rank, mutual benefit derived through patronage systems evidenced from a different context, the Inns of Court, see Peacey J.T., "Led by the hand: Manucaptors and Patronage at Lincoln's Inn in the Seventeenth Century", *The Journal of Legal History* 18, 1 (1997) 26–44.

withdrawal from Bradford, Anne Fairfax, the wife of the future parliamentary general, Thomas Fairfax (Ferdinando's son), who accompanied her husband on campaign throughout the wars, was captured by Newcastle. In a gestural enactment of the precepts of courtesy and honour, he released her after only a few days of entertainment in his camp, sending her in a coach with a cavalry escort to her husband in Hull.

This whole matter of the Newcastle-Fairfax courtesy debate reveals, then, something of the interplay of forms of honour through which Newcastle characteristically acted to maintain his values and identity before his defeat at Marston Moor. Actual military and political difference is mitigated by adherence to pre-existing loyalties: the transgenerational relationship, based on ties of patronage, loyalty and shared equine and literary-aesthetic currencies between Newcastle and the Fairfaxes informs their public address to one another, in spite of their direct engagement as opponents in battle. The Newcastle-Fairfax publicity skirmish equally reminds us of how transformative exchanges occurred between military actuality and a surrounding aestheticised ideology. If Newcastle's (and the Fairfaxes') modes of battle were shaped by codes of belief that were as much concerned with style as military efficacy and experience, so here actual combat between Fairfax and Newcastle is transformed for the moment into verbal jousting (about the merits and function of actual jousts and duels) that takes place in a shared cultural arena.

And – to return more directly to Newcastle's work with horses – the arts of the *manège*, too, are a refinement and an aestheticisation of traditional cavalry techniques. It is at the heart of Cavalier style, if not of battleground actuality. The movements of horses central to their role in battle (their need to turn and swerve, to halt and to charge) that are first performatively abstracted into the moves of the joust and tournament, become further refined and detached from military practicality as the core movements of the arts of the *manège*.³⁰ They include the changes of leg; the precise halts; the equal responsiveness and flexibility

³⁰ See Boehrer on the transition from a the medieval military concept of 'vertu' to a de-militarised version of the concept that is particularly associated with horsemanship and the arts of the *manège*. Boehrer B., "Shakespeare and the Social Devaluation of the Horse", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 91–111. See also Tucker on the same issue in a French context: Tucker T., "Early Modern French Noble Identity and the Equestrian 'Airs above the Ground'", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 273–309.

on both reins (or in both directions on a circle), when horses naturally, like humans, favour either the right or the left ('It is necessary', Newcastle writes, 'that a horse go to either hand'); the controlled canters; or those dancery 'airs above ground' of the capriole, ballotade, courbette.³¹ In constantly returning to his skills of horsemanship, then, Newcastle is returning after Marston Moor to the source of his earlier happiness and success, and to those core aristocratic ideals of a past world. But in so doing he is inevitably bringing memories of his fall back into present awareness. Both in the pervasive invocation of attitudes of courtesy in the written texts of all his horsemanship manuals³² and in the illustrative plates to *La Méthode Nouvelle* and *A General System of Horsemanship*, which visually reference his military role and his main residences (Welbeck and Bolsover, which as noted above, had been captured by Parliament in 1645), Newcastle performs his own work of self-restoration: of his past glory, of his core values, and of his identity-conferring houses (See Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 – titled 'La Bataille Gagnee'; and Figs. 10 and 11 for Bolsover Castle). But as his poems written during his early exile to Margaret Lucas, his future second wife, emphatically demonstrate, his self-definition, often figured through inscription of himself into his lost homes and estates, while ostensibly affirmative, witty and sensuous in an evocation of present feeling, is equally nostalgic, ever-conscious of what has been lost in its reference to the places that signify his past royal favour and courtly success.³³ The loves and activities of his life in exile are only ever partial compensations.

It is hard, then, not to see Newcastle's horsemanship activities and texts as similarly double-directional. They work to promote him by

³¹ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 33. Capriole: a static leap with outstretched hind legs; ballotade: a static leap with all four legs tucked under but the shoes of the hind hooves visible from behind; courbette: the horse stands and jumps on its hind legs alone, raising its forelegs. See Van Orden, "From *Gens d'Armes* to *Gentilshommes*" 202–203 for a fuller discussion of *manège* movements in relation to cavalry movements.

³² An attitude of courtesy is evident throughout in the measured tone and reasoned argument of Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship*. Particular reference to courtesy behaviour occurs in examples such as human duelling; 14.

³³ Douglas Grant D. (ed.), *The Phanseys of William Cavendish Marquis of Newcastle addressed to Margaret Lucas and her Letters in reply* (London: 1956), especially 'Love's Muster' 55–56. On 'Love's Muster' as a poem specifically invoking Bolsover Castle, see Raylor, T., "'Pleasure Reconcil'd to Virtue': William Cavendish, Ben Jonson, and the Decorative Scheme of Bolsover Castle", *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 (1999) 402–439.



Fig. 2. "La Bataille Gagnée". From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) vol. 1, plate 1. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.

returning him to his rightful environment and mode of being, but, in so doing, deploy the very signifiers of his loss. His horse-work and texts become a means of attempting to master his humiliation and trauma, depicting those skills most associated with his lost self to create a sublime reassertion of identity, a simulacrum of his past royalist role. In particular, through their direct representations of Newcastle triumphing over loss and death (figured as his physical elevation above fallen bodies and the debris of war in 'La Bataille Gagnée'), in their depiction of battle skills, aestheticised and spectacularised into the precise *manège* movements represented, and through their overall participation in a broader aesthetic that pertains to the sublime, the illustrations to *La Méthode Nouvelle* seem both to defy the experiences of trauma, destruction and loss – and to be saturated with the affective residue of those very experiences.

So, in order to explore further the emotional and psychic currents running through these texts, it may be useful now to stand back for a while from Newcastle himself and his *manège* work, and to look briefly at one of the *manège*'s descendant forms: circus. Of course, Newcastle, with his sense of the importance of aristocratic good-breeding, his embrace of the courtier's *sprezzatura*, his good manners, his self-valued sanguine temperament, would most likely be appalled by the introduction here of references to a popular form such as circus. Yet, psychically, historically and technically, *manège* arts and circus are related. A movement forward in history to the late eighteenth century establishes a cultural-historical link, illuminating retrospectively core elements present in seventeenth century horsemanship. And consideration of circus's amplification of the psychic dynamic it inherited from the *manège* might then enable us to explore further possible ways (particularly through reference to a psychoanalytic reading of the impulses of circus) in which the *manège* as an aesthetic was cathected.

Circus: War, Death, Love and Representation

It was in 1771 that Astley's Amphitheatre opened, marking the beginning of modern circus [Fig. 3]. This early circus developed out of Sergeant-Major Philip Astley's performances of *manège* work and trick riding every afternoon in the riding school, which he had opened in London after his discharge from the 15th Light Dragoon Regiment at the end

of the Seven Years War.³⁴ The Amphitheatre comprised a ring (at first sixty-two feet, then forty-two feet, which became the standard size for a circus ring), based on the *manège*, but circular – the cirque of circus – allowing riders, through centrifugal force, to maintain their balance on cantering horses while performing bareback acrobatic tricks. From this, Astley went on to develop spectacular, staged representations of battles and later also, in his Paris theatre, incorporated aspects of the *Commedia del'Arte* and European traditions, adding juggling, trapeze and rope artists. Equestrian acts – the origin of circus – however, remained central to circus into the twentieth century, and included not only trick riding but also pure *manège* arts or *haute école* and free-dancing horses. Modern horse performance (whether as a direct descendant of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *manège* skills, such as that of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna, or as evolved into the lyrical ballets of Bartabas and *Théâtre Equestre Zingaro*) marks the continuity and development of these skills into the present.³⁵ In general, all horse performance, in theatre, school or circus, developed out of a further spectacularisation and a popularisation of the *haute école* as created in the work of early modern horse masters such as Newcastle [Figs. 3 and 4]. And it is these later developments of horse theatre, of circus, that bring to the fore the less visible underpinnings of Newcastle's enterprise: the informing undercurrents of loss, love, triumph and failure that combine in his practice and aesthetic of the *manège*.

Love and loss, representation and death, as modern psychoanalysis – especially as inflected through the literary-theoretical work of the 1980s and 1990s – has so often told us, are intimately related. The rope artist, circus performer, playwright and director, John-Paul Zaccarini, inventing the term Circoanalysis, describes circus as dream work, responding to archaic human fears of falling, of destruction, of failure, of death. He writes: 'Circus is not just life writ large, not only

³⁴ For a biography of Astley, see Bemrose P., *Circus Genius. A Tribute to Philip Astley 1742–1814* (Newcastle-under-Lyme: 1992).

³⁵ Bartabas – Murobushi K., *Le Centaure et L'Animal*, Théâtre National de Chaillot and Sadler's Wells. This production, with the human artists, Bartabas and Ko Murobushi, and equine artists, Horizonte, Soutine, Pollock and Le Tintoret, (created 14th September 2010 at Odysud-Blagnac, performed at Sadler's Wells, London 1–6 March 2011), explores continuities and metamorphoses between living forms: 'Un cheval et un ange qui forment un même corps, voilà ce que l'on ne voit pas souvent.' The programme notes suggest: 'A centaur appears in the dreams of every rider' (André Velter). See Fig. 14 below for Van Diepenbeke's representation of this fantasy in relation to Newcastle.

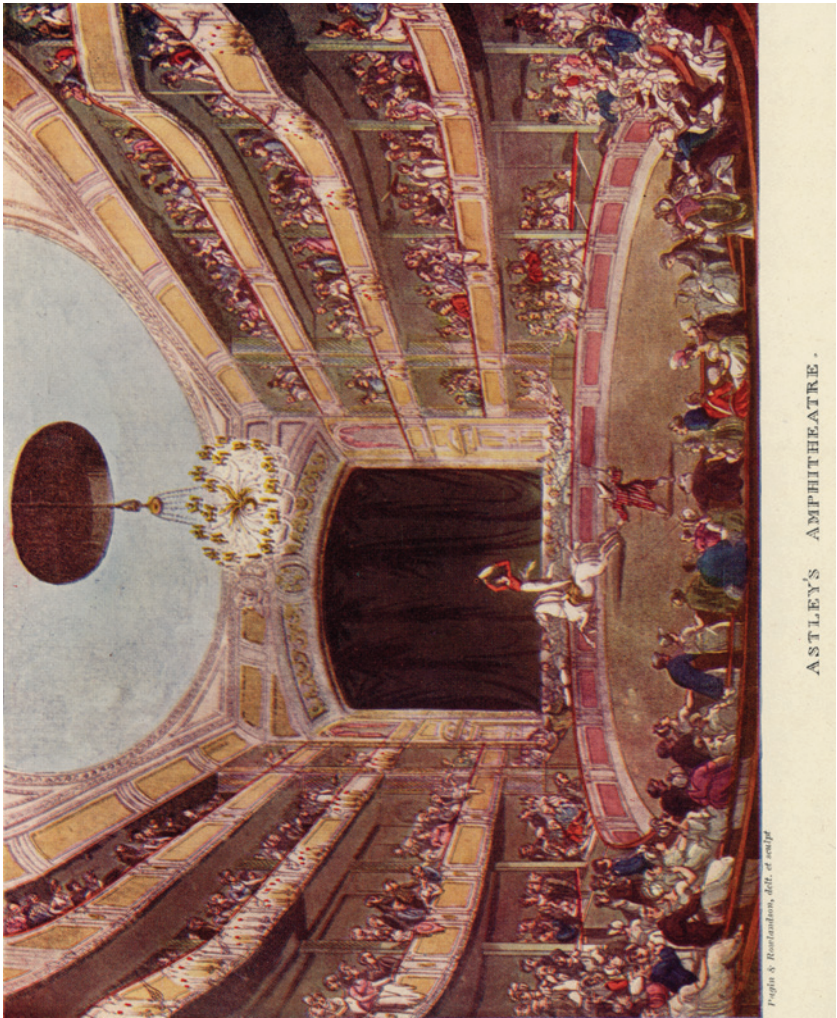


Fig. 3. "Astley's Amphitheatre". From R. Ackermann, *Microcosm of London* (London: 1808–1810).
Reproduced by permission of City of Westminster Archive Centre.



Fig. 4. Newcastle's sons, Charles, Viscount Mansfield and Lord Henry Cavendish, performing to a family audience including the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle. From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) Vol. I, plate 42. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.



Figs. 5 and 6. John-Paul Zaccarini – in performances reminiscent, in his negotiation of fall and elevation, and in his rope-body spirals, of the forms of baroque sculptures (see Figs. 7 and 8). Photographs: Eric Richmond. Images by permission of John-Paul Zaccarini.

life's success story of overcoming gravitational challenges, it is also a way of describing life's failure, of telling its possible death'.³⁶ Circo-analysis unearths 'blind repetitions' and in these, 'the darker edges of the innocent, pleasure seeking-circus can be found; circus as death-writing, writing-toward death'. It allows us to see that 'libidinal circus artists seem to have found a way of elucidating, alleviating the friction caused by a difficult desire, keeping one foot in anomaly, the other in cultural legibility'.³⁷ The doubleness of circus occurs in its highwire negotiation of, on one side, those abysses of feeling where there is a refusal or inability to recognise, process and articulate psychic experience and, on the other side, cultural form. It occurs at the point where form or articulation threatens to crash into silence or darkness or terror or chaos. This is the place of the sublime, in Slavoj Žižek's, rather than Zaccarini's, terms: 'the Sublime is [...] the paradox of an object which, in the very field of representation, provides a view, in a negative way, of the dimension of what is unrepresentable'.³⁸ Representation here is both positive (it represents something that is comprehensible and real) and negative (its form is shaped by what it cannot say, by its own ghost). And for Zaccarini, as implicitly with Žižek's Sublime, the work of circus, even as it attempts to enact defences against the pull of gravity, death and loss, is complicit in its repetitions and in its flirtation with falling, with the death drive [Figs. 5 and 6].³⁹ For Zaccarini, the circus artist, in his or her work on the trapeze, or juggling, or on the rope, (or on horseback), holding self or objects poised in flight, enacting repetition after repetition of these movements, is impelled by the death-drive, but simultaneously enacts defences against that impulsion, producing, 'a maniacally nostalgic compensation of imaginary' wholeness. Nostalgia, loss, compensatory activity, skilful physical control [...]. These might all also speak of Newcastle's *haute école* passion.

But, as Zaccarini recognises, circus (one might add, like *manège* work) is also a work of love:

³⁶ Zaccarini J-P., "Circus as Death Writing", unpublished paper given at the conference "The Work of Life-Writing" (King's College, London, 26–28 May 2009).

³⁷ Zaccarini, "Circus as Death Writing".

³⁸ Žižek S., *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: 1989) 203, quoted by De Groot J., *Royalist Identities* (Basingstoke – New York: 2004) 142.

³⁹ For a discussion of Freud's notion of the death drive (also in relation to horses, although in a different context) see Graham E., 'Being Human and Being Animal: "Word-Bound Creatures" and "the Breath of Horses"' in Mousley A. (ed.) *Towards a New Literary Humanism* (London: 2011) 59–76, esp. 63–64.

Eros and its legion of life-drives that seek to bind, connect, enhance life is bent on creating the beautiful while Thanatos, with its blind, lizard-brain death-drives must take the back seat. Thanatos is the slave to Eros, to the creation of the beautiful thing that will bind us all together in applause [...] and will [...] cheat death, reclaim[ing] the imaginary lost paradise of the integrated self.⁴⁰

Love: as an aspect of beauty, in the response of audience to performer, and in the partnerships of the *manège* (horse and human) or of circus, counters the gravitational pull of loss, failure and death.

Jerome de Groot has described how, in the face of a sense of ‘fragmentation of the body’ and ‘the end of identity’ effected by experience of the Civil War and the execution of Charles I, both ‘a sense of dislocation’ and a ‘problematic justification of normality’ characterises ‘all Royalist work’ which is always informed by the ‘desire to turn chaos into a theatrical narrative’.⁴¹ For Newcastle, his *manège* work and texts might be seen quite directly to theatricalise trauma, constantly repeating and exhibiting a bodily negotiation of the counter forces of death and love that operate through the intimate relationship of rider and horse and the dynamic between centaur-performer and audience. Both psychically and technically, then, the arts of circus, deriving from, and carrying with them, the same impelling or motivating forces as *manège* arts, involve discipline, high levels of skill and control as a counter to passion (in its full sense of suffering and feeling) and the force of unstructured and inarticulable experience and emotion. And circus and the *manège* alike, through the discipline of the body (horse and human), create a spectacular and aestheticised formalisation of intense, but controlled, power and feeling.

The Manège, Newcastle and the Baroque

Such a description of the *manège* as a highly aestheticised form, involving a tension between the passionate and sublime on the one hand and discipline and control on the other, might equally serve as a definition

⁴⁰ Zaccarini, “Circus as Death Writing”.

⁴¹ De Groot, *Royalist Identities*, Ch. six, “Fragmentation of the body and the end of identity”, especially 141–142.

of baroque aesthetics.⁴² And the *manège*, as horse ballet (sometimes horse opera, perhaps), is a recognisably baroque form. In the final line of her *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry on Newcastle, Lynne Hulse remarks that Newcastle was 'a major contributor to the development of the English baroque'.⁴³ Certainly, as his biography suggests, he was, throughout his adult life, immersed in the aesthetics of the baroque, his sensibility saturated with it.

An affinity between the baroque and the aesthetic preferences of the Caroline court, both before the civil war and while in exile, can be recognised in the shared baroque and Caroline strategies for encoding power through representations that induce wonder, that foreground a newly-emphasised cult of saints' bodily mortification (in the Counter Reformation manifestation) and martyrdom (in the correlating post-1649 cult of Charles I as martyr-king), counterpoised with an aesthetic dynamic of elevation, of raising the eyes upwards (to ceilings, then to heaven, or through the forms and angles of bodies) so that divine inspiration lifts earthly bodies into a glorious, corporeal, yet ethereal, infinity. Fall and rise, lush plenitude, passion are held in tension by the strict discipline of form: the control of architectural and engineering balance and precision, and the empiricist, rationalist or scientific identification of component features of the body with its precise musculoskeletal structure and the detail that creates the individual in all its particularity.⁴⁴ In the blend of southern Renaissance uses of geometric perspective and northern Renaissance uses of light and dark to produce depth, the baroque combines notions of presence and of recession into absence; delineates the vertical against the horizontal. It sets bodiliness against the void, light and rapture against shadow, darkness and death. It is a spectacular, theatrical aesthetic.

In baroque sculpture, in painting, in horse and human ballet we find a balance between the vertical – the movement to elevation, to

⁴² For a comprehensive overview of Baroque art, see Snodin M. – Llewellyn N. (eds.), assisted by Norman J., *Baroque 1620–1800. Style in the Age of Magnificence* (London: 2009).

⁴³ Hulse, "Cavendish".

⁴⁴ Fumerton P., *Cultural Aesthetics. Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago – London: 1991) 3–24 contains a reading of the execution of Charles I that brings out elements of theatricality, and the fragmentation and memorialisation of the body. Bernini's sculptures, or the Vatican's Scala Regia, or the painted and sculpted ceilings of Rome's Palazzo Barberini, San Carlo alla Quattro Fontane and Santa Andrea al Quirinale, or of London's Banqueting House all exemplify such features.

transcendence, to the celestial – and the horizontal. This is particularly pronounced in the van Diepenbeke/Clouvet engravings to *La Méthode Nouvelle* and *A General System of Horsemanship* with their idiosyncratic blend of English vernacular representation (of houses and localised environment) and baroque flamboyance [Figs. 9 and 10].

The intersection of the horizontal and vertical produces spatial balance. It simultaneously implies the setting of history, life in the world, against a transcendence of history to create spiritual, moral and temporal balance. And, in the case of ballet and the *manège*, it points to the predication of these forms on actual bodily balance. Evidently, the relationship of the human to the horse is crucially based on balance: involving not just the human keeping his or her balance, as in tight-rope walking, but also kinaesthetic relationship, a harmony of bodily interaction.⁴⁵ Rider and horse communicate corporeally: the rider uses his or her weight and the balance of the body, especially the pelvis and the shoulders and arms, to speak to the horse, to effect its movement. This replicates, then, the sculptural and painterly emphasis on the tension between the planes of the shoulders and hips moving in different directions that is characteristic of the baroque [Figs. 7 and 8], although it works to different effect. For the horse, too, the athletic discipline involved in the *manège* focuses on the production of impulsion (power and movement) from the quarters: ‘A horse that does not go well upon his haunches, can never do well in the Manege so that our whole study is to put him upon them’.⁴⁶

But it is the specific manipulation of shoulders in relation to croup that is key to particular movements. Speaking of one of only two artificial movements the horse is required to make in his system, Newcastle explains:

Some imagine that the croupe of the horse is his centre, and that his fore-part makes the circumference, which is impossible. For a horse by no means resembles a pair of compasses, that has only two legs, but [is] an animal with four; so that the centre is never in the horse, but in the pillar, or in an imaginary centre of the circle in which the horse works [...].⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See Tucker, “French Noble Identity” for a discussion of the equine and human physical skills essays involved in the work of the *manège*. For horses, music and harmony, see LeGuin E., “Man and Horse in Harmony”, in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 175–196.

⁴⁶ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 63.

⁴⁷ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 33.



Fig. 7. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Altar of the Cornaro Chapel (*Ecstasy of Saint Theresa*), Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome (1647–1652). © Photo Scala, Florence / Fondo Edifici di Culto - Min. dell'Interno.



Fig. 8. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Rape of Proserpine* (detail), Galleria Borgheses, Rome (1622). © Photo Scala, Florence / Luciano Romano, courtesy of the Ministero e Att. Culturali.

Figs. 7 and 8. The baroque as: science, passion, control, spectacle, and spiraling movement.



Figs. 9 and 10. Balance and elevation, geometry and nature, spectacle and movement, passion and discipline: Newcastle in front of Bolsover Castle performing a capriole [Fig. 9] and a ballotade [Fig. 10]. From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) vol. I, plates 33 and 32. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.

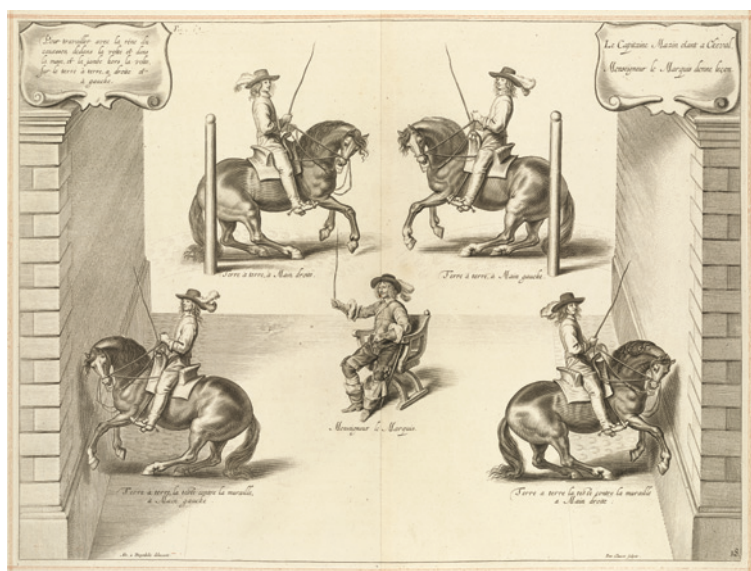


Fig. 11. Training with a pillar or wall. The baroque as: science, discipline, balance, movement and tension. From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) vol. I, plate 18. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.



Fig. 12. Newcastle's apotheosis. From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) vol. I, plate 4. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.

Such moves represent a version of the spiral at the heart of baroque. Movement is produced out of internal corporeal tension and counter-poise, but also from the tension between movement and fixity (here the fixed pillar or buttress used in training) that yields the aesthetic effect of *manège* arts and baroque art, as well as being core to the physical discipline (as it is to human ballet). The rising and descending spiral forms of sculptures such as Bernini's *The Rape of Proserpina* or *The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa* [Figs. 7 and 8], whose subjects of ascension and descent (Saint Theresa of Ávila, according to her own accounts, was prone to involuntary physical levitation in her moments of rapture)⁴⁸ are captured in their composition, and are mirrored in the elevations of the equine 'airs above ground', just as in the pirouettes and stag jumps of ballet.

As the quotation above suggests, and as any reading of *A General System of Horsemanship* immediately reveals, the scientificism of the baroque is also fully present here. The minutely detailed descriptions of a horse's actions and paces anticipate the work of Muybridge's photographs of the 1870s in the identification of precise movements of the horses' legs.⁴⁹ Similarly, that high individualism, so present in, say, Caravaggio's portraits, recurs in equine form here in the horse portraits included in the illustrations to *A General System of Horsemanship*. The horses represented here are not generic, but very particular horses: those actual horses loved, nurtured and trained by Newcastle, even as they are also representative of certain breeds (Makomia, the Turk, for instance is metonymically identified by his black groom, just as the Spanish horse, the Neapolitan and the Barb are also depicted alongside grooms with national costume and racial appearance). But what we see further, here in all of these illustrations, is how nature and passion are grounded by discipline, so that they aspire towards heaven but, through the combined wildness yet groundedness of horses, retain the physical presence of the earthly. In all of these engravings, shadows are important. Light and dark is directly signified but so, too, is the specific tension between the movement to heaven, and that belonging to a corporeal, terrestrial world. Even in the most grandiose of the

⁴⁸ St Theresa of Ávila, *The Life of Saint Theresa of Ávila by Herself*, transl. and intro., J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: 1957), Ch. 20, esp. 137: 'my soul has been carried away [...] and sometimes it has affected my whole body, which has been lifted from the ground'.

⁴⁹ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 30ff.

engravings, where Newcastle ascends to heaven on Pegasus, members of his earth-bound equine audience are represented as firmly-shadowed creatures of substance [Fig. 12].

The Baroque and Power

In its counterpoint of the earthly with the transcendent, of light with dark, and form with a surrounding or central void, the baroque manipulates exchanges between body and feeling, death and love, suffering and joy. It was particularly open, then, to adoption as a core English royalist aesthetic. A fusion of honour, glory and magnificence with the nobility of gracious suffering, especially after the publication of *Eikon Basilike*, offers one means of negotiating defeat. A version of the baroque not only provides an aesthetic of resistance to loss – flying in the face of death's threat and of the dissolution of a self predicated on the aristocratic values of a defeated age – but also an aesthetic that responds to threat through a flamboyant spectacularisation of riches, consumption and power. It has its directly philosophical and political counterpart in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, an essentially baroque political theorist. As Eric Heinze has suggested: 'the baroque turns [Machiavelli's] prince from someone resignedly – even reluctantly – evil into someone scintillating and glorious. Hobbes is Titian and Rubens [...] 'Riches', he tells us, 'are honourable; for they are power'. Hobbes urges the ruler's wealth to be 'conspicuous'. His world is a place of luxury and indulgence, pathos and drama, pomp and power.⁵⁰

Hobbes was, of course, the house philosopher of the wider Cavendish family. He had been tutor to the second and third Earls of Devonshire, Newcastle's cousins, and had been closely associated with Newcastle and his scientifically-interested brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, during the 1630s and 40s. They became his patrons in exile in France in the late 1640s, supporting him as he evolved his major philosophical and scientific theories, while Hobbes, in turn, like all those surrounding Newcastle, acted as an agent in both his intellectual and his equine enterprises. At one moment in 1633/4 Hobbes could write to Newcastle

⁵⁰ Heinze E., "Power, Sovereignty, Modernity, and the Baroque", unpublished paper given at the annual meeting of the The Law and Society Association (Chicago, Illinois, 27.5.04; http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p116802_index.html, accessed 19.6.09).

about his quest to 'seeke for Galileos dialogues' for him, and a year later could describe his role in the acquisition of the most acclaimed of Newcastle's horses, *Le Superbe*.⁵¹ And Hobbes's influence is apparent throughout *A General System of Horsemanship*: Newcastle's treatise corresponds closely to Hobbesian method in its rationalist itemisation of component points built, precisely, into a system;⁵² and it is easy to recognise a general sympathy between Newcastle's royalist beliefs and Hobbes's theories of absolute sovereignty.

Newcastle also acknowledges Hobbes quite specifically in his 'Introduction' to *A General System of Horsemanship*:

Although horses do not form their reasonings from ABC, which as that admirable and most excellent philosopher master Hobbes says, is no language, but the marks and representation of things, he must notwithstanding give me leave to think, that they draw their reasonings from things themselves. [...] Many are of the opinion, that the reason why men speak, and not the beasts, is owing to nothing else, but that the beasts have not so much vain-glory as men, which produces language in them; and we see the rarity of things among many Indians occasions their using language very little.⁵³

The implications of this dialogic reference to Hobbes yield some of the ambiguities of Newcastle's values and thought on power. Newcastle, here, is primarily referring to Hobbes's notion of the language-basis of human epistemology and the differentiation of this from nonhuman modes of knowing and thinking. He is alluding, as well, to Hobbes's notion of what is common to human and nonhuman mental process: that thought is produced from sensory input and this, accumulated and connected through time, becomes experience, or 'remembrance of what antecedents have been followed by what consequents'.⁵⁴ This shared aspect of Hobbes's understanding of mental process is, of course, central to Newcastle's training method. His explanation of how a horse will resist a violent horseman, for instance, explicitly suggests

⁵¹ Thomas Hobbes to Earl of Newcastle at Welbeck, 26 Jan. 1633/4 (British Library, Add MS 70499, Fol. 172); Thomas Hobbes to Earl of Newcastle, 15/25 Aug. 1635 (British Library, Add MS 70499, Fol. 184).

⁵² See especially chapters on *manège* techniques and movements, Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 30–67.

⁵³ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 12.

⁵⁴ Hobbes Thomas, *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico. The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic* (Oxford: 1994) 4.6, discussed by Pettit P., *Made with Words. Hobbes on Language, Mind and Politics* (Princeton – Oxford: 2008) 13–16, quoted at 15.

that a horse remembers previous episodes of violence or coercion and will react accordingly once the rider's behaviour is repeated: the horse 'will run against a wall, lie down, bite, kick, and commit a thousand such like disorders'.⁵⁵ However, Newcastle's courteous, but firm, statement of difference from Hobbes on the issue of human language suggests a significant separation of views. It is his immersion in the world of horses and in horse-human relationships that leads Newcastle to emphasize the importance of different forms of 'reasonings'. So, while he concurs with Hobbes on the language-basis of human epistemology (being human is all about 'vain-glory': possession, display and representation), he insists that horses live in an unmediated world, 'draw[ing] their reasonings from things themselves'. They are directly in touch with, and respond to, the terrestrial realities of nature and experience; they are epistemologically as well as ontologically grounded (as van Diepenbeke's/Clouvet's shadows suggest) [Figs. 9–13]. To work successfully with horses, to enter their understanding, is then to bring two versions of reality into fusion.

This idea develops further in Newcastle's passing comment on how 'the rarity of things among many Indians occasions their using language very little'. This suggests that Newcastle's notion of a state of nature is not the human state of nature envisaged by Hobbes. While Hobbes illustrated his idea of a state of nature by reference to the 'savage' nations of America that pre-existed civil society in order to show how civil war can return an established civil society to such a state, Newcastle's attunement to the natural 'reasonings' of horses leads him to a different vision. As the van Diepenbeke/Clouvet representations of Newcastle's views show, just as horses are naturally rational, so animals in a landscape have their own language of civilisation [Fig. 13]. In the idyllic grove, the Vergilian landscape suggested here, we see animals behaving naturally – and using some of the very same movements that occur in *haute école*. Newcastle's claim is always that his dressage method is not artificial but is a true education, an enhancement of the horse's natural inclination.⁵⁶ Nature is not a regression from civilisation, as for Hobbes, but is the complement of the human. Through their partnership, humans transport the horse into a world of representation and import some elements of human artifice into

⁵⁵ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 105.

⁵⁶ Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 17; 33.



Fig. 13. A civilised state of nature. From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) vol. 1, plate 12. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.

the natural, equine world. (We see in this illustration, how buildings are incorporated into the natural landscape; or, in others, how mares and foals, at ease in nature, are adorned with Newcastle's crest.) But horses, in giving homage and subjecting themselves to the human, provide a possibility of transcendence of those very human, negative experiences – failure, loss of reputation – that, in an essentially Hobbesian manner, depend on representation.

Hobbes is famously seen in two ways: as a theorist of totalitarianism (in his proposition that power can only logically be invested in an undivided sovereign body) but equally (through his advocacy of a social contract theory) as a parent of liberalism.⁵⁷ Newcastle's engagement with Hobbesian thought, both in his concurrences and differences, replicates some of this ambiguity of political value. Like Hobbes, Newcastle believed that opulence marked power: glorious representation is all. And he believed absolutely that just as he owed a subject's allegiance to his king, so his social subordinates owed obedience and cultural deference to him. On the eve of his much-wished-for Restoration he complained that its terms meant, 'every citizen's wife will have six horses in her coach, which is most unfitting'.⁵⁸ Yet, his horsemanship texts might suggest something rather different: an intuitively participative and collaborative sensibility. Certainly, his whole method of horsemanship is based on giving (not imposing) a structure to the wild, of giving form to the actions of natural, powerful animals.⁵⁹ If, for Hobbes, it is language which enables humans to 'personate', to give their word to others, and in so doing symbolically delegate or transfer their personal power so as to 'incorporate' or participate in group agency, for Newcastle, it seems, it is interaction with others, including horses, that produces agency.⁶⁰ If his is a strongly participatory sensibility, it is one with an affective and bodily, rather than a language-based and abstract, underpinning. The mechanisms of 'incorporation' and 'personation' that for Hobbes bring about political being, are

⁵⁷ Heinze, "Power, Sovereignty, Modernity, and the Baroque".

⁵⁸ Strong S.A. (comp.), *A Catalogue of Letters and Other Historical Documents Exhibited in the Library at Welbeck* (1903) 211, quoted in Thomas K., *The Ends of Life* 137.

⁵⁹ See for instance, Cavendish, *General System of Horsemanship* 17: 'If the horse is fit to go a Travelling-pace, let him do it; if he is naturally inclined to make Curvets, he must be put to it [...] If none of these suit him, he will perhaps be good for racing, hunting, or travelling [...]'.
⁶⁰ See Pettit, *Made with Words* 55–83.

replaced for Newcastle by an interactive practice and an aesthetic that sublimates, renders sublime, active political power.

Amongst other things, Newcastle was a great enabler: of artists; poets; dramatists; musicians; his daughters; his wife, Margaret Cavendish; even the young Prince Charles. It is that capacity to facilitate others (especially others more usually denied agency: women, animals), while partaking of their talents in fashioning his own identity, in counterpoint with his hierarchical and royalist beliefs, that seems to encapsulate his essential being and experience. A shifting balance of love and power is apparent in all aspects of Newcastle's life. But it is in his work and writing on horsemanship that the dynamic interplay of ideological values and structures of feeling takes most emphatic form, culminating in his truly baroque, perhaps even witty, vision of himself as monarch to horses:

Et que tous les Chevaux sont assujettis à sa loy;
Pius qu'ils luy obeissent comme a leur proper ROY. [Fig. 2]



Fig. 14. Newcastle as monarch of horses, centaurs and nature. From William Cavendish, *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743) vol. I, plate 3. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford.

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VISUAL AIDS: EQUESTRIAN ICONOGRAPHY AND THE TRAINING OF HORSE, RIDER AND READER

Pia F. Cuneo

In the visual landscape of the early modern period, images of men on horseback occur with great frequency. Art historians are well acquainted with such imagery, especially as it appears in scenes that serve to connote power and prestige – in illustrations of battles and processions, and in portraiture of individuals. The ubiquity and, in some instances, the unabashedly formulaic quality of this imagery, coupled with the extremely limited role in our present culture played by the horse (an animal with which most people today lack personal familiarity), have encouraged a likewise formulaic and limited understanding of this early modern visual construct.

My essay seeks in two ways to invigorate the general torpidity of current art historical interpretation. First, it considers instances of equestrian imagery not usually analysed by art historians. Instead of looking at portraits and images of battles and ceremonies, I turn to book illustrations accompanying printed manuals of horsemanship. Information pertaining to the training and riding of horses provides the main content of these books that have remained outside the purview of art historical discourse. Second, my essay bridges the hermeneutic divide between using imagery as visual evidence of historical phenomena and conditions on the one hand, and treating imagery as the product of artistic/artisanal and technical training on the other. Treating the manuals' illustrations both as visual evidence and as artistic product allows me to consider the function of these images in order to pursue two intertwined goals: one is to use the images to get at a more specific understanding of the physical and the metaphysical goals of early modern riding, and the other is to consider how the images' mobilization and innovation of equestrian iconography¹ serve to communicate specific ideals and to construct particular identities.

¹ I am using the term 'equestrian iconography' in this essay to refer to the visual tradition going back to antiquity that features a man mounted on horseback.

Like the rider who trains the horse to perform various movements through the application of physical cues, collectively known as “the aids,” the images position the reader through visual cues to understand and accept a complex register of information about the text, the subject and the projected ideal identities of rider, reader and artist. That these identities are negotiated literally and figuratively on horseback attests to the primary importance of the horse in early modern history and culture.

My study of this subject began with an initial confrontation with an image that I, as a trained historian of Renaissance art, found vaguely laughable. For a number of years now, I have been working with a tremendously rich collection of early modern German printed books dealing with the training, stabling and treatment of horses. The collection, located at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, includes a ponderous tome bearing the title: *Vollkommener ergänzter Pferd-Schatz [...] In Gestalt einer außführlichen [...] Theoria Und auff dieselbe gegründete Praxis verfasst [...]* (*The Completely Revised Treasury of Horses Conceived in the Form of Detailed Theory and of Theory-based Practice*).² The author is nowhere named in the book itself. The name Johann Christian Pinter von der Au appears in the title of the book’s later editions but information about this person has yet to be discovered. It was in viewing this book’s title-page engraving that I first confronted my own assumptions and then learned to correct them.³

The title-page engraving [Fig. 1] depicts what appears to be a stone plinth positioned in a barrel-vaulted passageway. The vaults are framed by fluted pilasters supporting slender entablatures and coffered arches. At the far end of the passageway, at the left margin of the page, a distant landscape consisting of a fence, various kinds of vegetation and the sky is visible. Appearing to be chiselled on the surface of the plinth parallel to the picture plane are the book’s title, place of publication, publisher and imperial publishing privilege. Atop the plinth

² *Vollkommener ergänzter Pferd-Schatz [...] In Gestalt einer außführlichen [...] Theoria Und auff dieselbe gegründete Praxis verfasst [...]* (Frankfurt am Main, Thomas Götze: 1664).

³ I discuss the *Pferd-Schatz* and this image in Cuneo P.F., “Das Reiten als Kriegstechnik, als Sport und als Kunst: Die Körpertechniken des Reitens und gesellschaftliche Identität im frühneuzeitlichen Deutschland” and “Die Kultur des Reitens im frühneuzeitlichen Deutschland”, in Mallinkrodt R. (ed.), *Bewegtes Leben. Körpertechniken in der frühen Neuzeit* (Wiesbaden: 2008) 178–180, 336–338.



Fig. 1. Title-page engraving of Christoph Metzger and Johann Philipp Thelott, *Vollkommener ergäntzter Pferd-Schatz* [...] (Frankfurt am Main, Thomas Götze: 1664).

is a mounted rider whose horse has elevated its front legs and balances its own weight and that of its rider on its hind legs. Inscriptions at the bottom left and right of the page identify the artists involved in producing this engraving. Typical for the manufacture of printed imagery, there are (at least) two people involved: one who is responsible for the design and composition, which is usually delivered in the form of a drawing, and another, who takes the drawing, transfers it on to the copper plate and engraves it. The plate is then printed, often by a third person. In the case of the *Pferdt-Schatz* title-page engraving, Christoph Metzger was responsible for the image's design and composition; his name appears at the bottom left of the engraving followed by the initials 'Inv.' for 'Inventor'. His colleague, Johann Philipp Thelott, named at the bottom right and designated as 'Sc.' for 'Sculptor', was responsible for the engraving process. These designations from the Latin are typical in the production of prints and both Metzger and Thelott were active as illustrators for the manufacture of books in Frankfurt. Both worked on numerous projects for Thomas Matthias Götze, whose Frankfurt publishing house also produced the *Pferdt-Schatz*.⁴

The compositional structure of Metzger and Thelott's engraving is noticeably unstable – the artists did not keep a tight rein on the orthogonals and instead allowed each of them to amble off in different directions, resulting in a somewhat disjointed spatial realm. In addition, although the horse and rider were supposed to appear monumental, they struck me as faintly ridiculous, perched improbably atop the stone plinth. Like the spatial realm, the figures of horse and rider seemed to bear the marks of artists whose ambitions out-paced their abilities. Faced with the technically difficult challenge of rendering the horse and rider directly *en face*, the artists would have required sure and confident mastery of foreshortening and perspective in order to meet that challenge successfully. But such mastery appeared to have eluded them. The horse's hind hooves point away from each other in opposite directions, as if it were performing a balletic plié, while the front hooves are parallel to each other and both point off to the left. The anatomical relationships between the rider's left hand and

⁴ For Christoph Metzger, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. H. Vollmer, vol. XXIII/XXIV (Leipzig: 1999) 446. For Johann Philipp Thelott, *Allgemeines Lexikon*, vol. XXXI/XXXIII 593.

arm, his left thigh and his torso and between the horse's body and its tail can only be described as mysterious. But what struck me the most was the expression of the horse's face. With what seems to be a comically exaggerated look of seriousness, the horse appears to be cogitating mightily upon some immensely difficult topic. Compared to other seventeenth-century equestrian figures such as those produced by Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641) and Diego Velázquez (c. 1636) [Fig. 2], Metzger and Thelott's horse and rider look technically maladroit.

Eventually I turned the page and moved on to the book's text. The *Pferdt-Schatz* really did live up to its name; it turned out to be a veritable treasure-trove of information about all kinds of assumptions, influences, notions and techniques. Reading the text was not only informative, however; it also made me change my mind about the engraved title-page illustration. Certainly, no one would ever win the argument that this image belongs to the category of great art. Measured against the twin ideals argued to be embodied in canonical early modern art, namely the ideals of artistic facility and descriptive verisimilitude, the engraving clearly falls short. However, regarded as a multilayered system of visual signifiers that evoke, introduce and recapitulate key concepts found in the text, the engraving is highly successful. Ontology is everything here. Regarded as something it never claimed to be, a work of art, the image fails miserably. Regarded according to the function it was meant to fulfill, as a title-page illustration, the image succeeds brilliantly.

The engraving's function and success become clear when specific passages of the text are carefully considered. Like most of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century German books on horsemanship, the *Pferdt-Schatz* insists on the venerable antiquity of horsemanship. A host of classical authors are corralled and cited for their praise of horses and of those who ride and care for them appropriately. These Greek and Roman authors include men such as Xenophon, Aristotle, Herodotus, Pliny, Plutarch, Varro and Vegetius. In addition, great heroes of antiquity – the usual suspects – who have conquered their enemies in mounted battle are trotted out before the reader; Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar make numerous appearances.

But the *Pferdt-Schatz* not only looks towards the distant past for legitimization and inspiration – it also draws from the recent past, especially from the earlier seventeenth-century work of Antoine de Pluvinet (b. 1552). Until his death in 1620, Pluvinet was the riding



Fig. 2. Diego Velázquez, *Equestrian Portrait of Don Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-Duke Olivares*, ca. 1635. Oil on canvas, 50¼ × 41in. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

master to the French King, Louis XIII (reigned 1610 to 1643), and he was also the author of a highly influential treatise on the art of riding. His text *Le Maneige Royal* was first printed posthumously in 1623 and its expanded second edition, *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercise de monter a cheval*, appeared in 1625.⁵ The *Pferdt-Schatz* cites Pluvinel on a number of occasions, although one cannot in any way designate the German text as a copy of the French royal riding master's manual.

Both works, however, do share an emphasis on riding as a noble art, the adjective "noble" here referring specifically to social identity, not to some vaguely fine quality. Pluvinel's text is written as a dialogue between those who seek to perform horsemanship at its highest possible level, namely the king, his riding master and his noble courtiers.⁶ This purported dialogue is even the subject of one of the engravings that we find in the richly illustrated work of Pluvinel; the artist here is the engraver, Crispijn de Passe the Younger (1593–1670). Although the *Pferdt-Schatz* makes a point of discussing many different kinds of horses suited for many different kinds of work, the text clearly insists that the horse finds its supreme utility when employed by noble rulers ('der hohe Regierstand'):

It is redundantly clear that God made horses, especially in terms of their higher use and exercise, particularly beneficial and appurtenant to the most noble of rulers. This is because, in everything a horse is used for, there is not one thing that is not appropriate, commodious, essential, and serviceable to the rulers' ornamentation, elevation, propagation, facilitation, and protection.⁷

⁵ Platte M., *Die "Maneige Royal" des Antoine de Pluvinel*, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 89 (Wiesbaden: 2000) 40–47, 51–53.

⁶ de Pluvinel Antoine, *Maneige royal où l'on peut remarquer le defect et la perfection du chevalier en tous les exercices de cet art [...]* (Paris, Guillaume LeNoir: 1624). For a fascimile of the 1626 edition of Pluvinel translated into English, see de Pluvinel, Antoine, *The Maneige Royal*, transl. H. Nelson (London: 1969).

⁷ All translation from the German into English are my own unless otherwise noted. *Pferdt-Schatz* Part I 143: "Worauß zum überfluß erscheinet/wie Gott die Pferde/mit ihren unterschiedenen/sonderlich aber hohen Gebrauch und übung/dem hohen Regierstand/forderst zum besten erschaffen/zugeeignet und geschencket: Weil in allem Gebrauch der Pferde und derselben unterschiedlichen Art/nichts ist/welches nicht eigentlich zur Zierde/Erhebung/Vermehrung/Erleichterung und Versicherung oder beständiger Erhaltung desselben angesehen/bequem/nötig und dienstlich wär [...]". For a similar emphasis on the nobility of ridings, see von Dehnen Rothfeller E.A., *Kurze doch eigentliche und gründliche Beschreibung von Abrichtung und Zäumung der Roße/Auch wie dieselbigen zu allerhand Schimpff und Ernst zu gebrauchen* (Dresden, Gmel Berg: 1637) 4: "kein edler Kleinod ist/als ein edles/gehorsames vermögens/wohl abgerichtetes Ross/darauff Land und Leute erhalten/erwerben

Another reason why riding is so particularly appropriate to the nobility, the *Pferdt-Schatz* implies, is that it is so difficult; and here riding is meant as performance, as opposed to simply a method of transportation. To ride a horse correctly demands a tremendous amount of theoretical knowledge, physical skill (acquired by correct instruction and endless practice), emotional equilibrium and even moral rectitude. The dual emphasis on both practice and theory is already evident in the book's full title. At the beginning of the second main part of the text, riding is discussed as an activity that not only engages the body and the senses but also the mind and the intellect. The text asserts that riding should be considered on a par with the liberal arts taught at the universities by famous professors, because riding too must be grounded in fundamental theory.⁸ In fact, an earlier German text, published in 1637, argues that it is actually easier to obtain a doctoral degree at a university than it is to train a horse successfully because a student requires fewer skill-sets than a rider does.⁹

In riding the horse, all of that theoretical knowledge – about the physical and emotional nature of individual horses and about the correct implementation of a vast array of methods and equipment used to train and maintain them – must be physically activated. To do this requires a high degree of bodily competence and control. We get a glimpse of how demanding this is when we consider the section in the *Pferdt-Schatz* that describes in excruciating detail how the rider is to position each part of his body, from his toes to his eyeballs and everything in between, no matter what the c. 1200 lb. horse is doing

ritterlichen Thaten/Erhöhung seines Standes/Lob/Ehr/Rhum/Hab/Gutt erhalten werden" (there is no greater treasure than a noble, obedient, well-trained horse upon which territory and folk are maintained, knightly deeds are accomplished, elevation of social rank is achieved and praise, honor, fame, worth and possessions are preserved).

⁸ *Pferdt-Schatz*, Part II 1–2.

⁹ von Dehnen Rothfelder, *Abrichtung und Zäumung* 99–100: "Ist es denn auch schwer ein Ross abzurichten? Wann einer nicht recht darzu naturet und gleich von Gott darzu geschaffen von Leib und Gemueth/so wird er schwerlich also beschaffen werden/einen grossen Herren darvor zu dienen/und profession darvon zumachen/und solte einer eher studieren/und Doctorem promovieren koenne/denn er nicht so viel Eigenschafften haben muss [...]" (So is it difficult to train a horse? If one does not have the right nature for it, and one's physical and emotional constitution were not as it were created by God for this purpose, one would hardly be suited to thus serve a powerful master and to make it [i.e. training horses] his profession. In this case it would be better for him to study and obtain his doctorate because [for this endeavor] he won't need as many qualities [as a professional horse trainer]).

underneath him.¹⁰ In describing this position, the text repeatedly admonishes the rider assiduously to avoid all extremes. For example, the rider's shoulders should be carried neither too high nor too low, the legs and elbows should be held neither too far back nor too far forward, the calves and the feet should not angled in or out, the toes should not be raised too high or the heels dropped too low, the torso should incline neither forwards nor backwards. The rider is repeatedly reminded always to seek 'das rechte Mittel'. While what is ostensibly described in this passage coincides to a large extent with what is still considered today as the optimal dressage seat,¹¹ the carefully crafted rhetoric and particular vocabulary indicate that there may be other things at play here. I believe we may be hearing the echoes of the structure and vocabulary of Aristotle's concept of the golden mean from his *Nicomachean Ethics*, written in the fourth century BCE, already translated from the Greek into Latin by the thirteenth century and subsequently tremendously influential on manifold aspects of early modern thought.¹² As the rider learns to balance his body in the saddle between kinetic extremes, no matter what the horse is dishing out, so he should learn to balance his desires and actions in life between emotional and physical extremes, regardless of the conditions he is facing.

Since Aristotle, the difficult achievement of balance between extremes was a matter of virtue. The ethos of early modern European nobility, formulated in texts belonging to the Mirror of Princes genre and in contemporaneous tracts discussing the history and character of the nobility, in fact demanded that a nobleman demonstrate virtue in every aspect of his life.¹³ Virtue provided an ethical legitimization of noble status and could be displayed and demonstrated in a number of ways, including the spiritual, the intellectual and the physical. Although constitutive elements of noble identity and thus of virtue were in a state of flux during the later part of the sixteenth- and in the seventeenth century, some traditional definitions of noble virtue remained in currency. For the lower nobility, these included loyalty to and support of the prince. One important way to demonstrate this

¹⁰ *Pferdt-Schatz*, Part II 3–29.

¹¹ See for example Zettl W., *Dressage in Harmony* (Boonsboro, MD.: 1998) 48–51.

¹² See the discussion of the golden mean in Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics", in Mckee R. (ed.), *Introduction to Aristotle* (New York: 1947) 331–347.

¹³ Knall-Brskovsky U., "Ethos und Bildwelt des Adels", in *Adel im Wandel. Politik, Kultur, Konfession 1500–1700* (Horn: 1990) 480–497.

loyalty and support was on the back of a horse, whether as a commander of the prince's armed forces or as a performer in court ceremonies and spectacles.¹⁴

In addition to finding balance and to facilitate appropriate and thus virtuous service to the prince, a nobleman could learn many important things from interacting with his horse in the *manège*. For example, he would learn to distinguish duplicity from honesty and disingenuous servility from genuine service. In his book, *Von der Gestütere* (Frankfurt, 1584), Marx Fugger cites the hellenistic philosopher, Carneades, in maintaining that it was especially urgent for the sons of princes to learn to ride.¹⁵ As opposed to human tutors, who might flatter their noble charges in order to ingratiate themselves, the horse would provide utterly honest feedback. No matter how exalted the rider's rank and title, the horse would appropriately reward him for his mistakes by tossing his royal person in the dirt.

There were other highly valuable things to learn as well. According to the *Pferd-Schatz*, learning to ride provided a concomitant education in leadership skills.¹⁶ In interacting with his horse, a young nobleman learned to distinguish and recognize the distinct natures of the dominator and the dominated. He learned to exercise his authority over subordinates and he practiced feats of courage as well as methods of punishment and reward. These were exactly the skills he would need in his future role as leader of a noble household, an army, a territory or an empire.

Furthermore, the *Pferd-Schatz* text explains, learning to ride also provided the young nobleman with the opportunity to develop and exercise morality.¹⁷ True leadership, in good government as in skilled riding, is never a question of authority imposed by brute force. Instead, what is called for is skill and judgment in creating a willing acceptance

¹⁴ For both the belligerent and the ceremonial aspects of mounted service that respond to changing technologies and strategies of both warfare and representation, see Watanabe-O'Kelly H., *Triumphant Shews. Tournaments at German-speaking Courts in their European Context 1560–1730* (Berlin: 1992) and Schmidt G., "Voraussetzung oder Legitimation? Kriegsdienst und Adel im Dreißigjährigen Krieg", in Oexle O.G. – Paravicini W., *Nobilitas. Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa* (Göttingen: 1997) 431–451.

¹⁵ Marx Fugger (1527–1597), humanist, hippologist, and head of the Fugger firm in Augsburg. Carneades of Cyrene (214/213–129/128 B.C.E.). Fugger Marx, *Von der Gestütere* (Frankfurt a. M., Martin Lechler for Sigmund Feyrabend: 1584) fols. 23r–24v.

¹⁶ *Pferd-Schatz*, Part I 144.

¹⁷ *Pferd-Schatz*, Part I 144.

on the part of the dominated for their role in the unequal balance of power. For this, the young nobleman had to learn not only how to punish and reward but when to do so and in what measure. He was also to learn that these actions must never be dictated by his emotions (such as impatience, anger, frustration) but must proceed instead from sound judgement, deep knowledge and far-sighted wisdom. It was also the moral obligation of those in leadership roles to protect and defend their charges and to create conditions in which those charges would flourish in safety, health and prosperity. Chosen by God to lead, it was their moral responsibility to deal considerately with other members of God's creation, be those other members equine or human subjects, by treating them with kindness, fairness and mercy. This emphasis on the appropriate and measured control of potentially unruly and violent elements echoes the classical trope in which the human bridling the horse demonstrates rational and virtuous command of the passions which in classical philosophy must never be allowed to rule humankind.

The *Pferdt-Schatz* makes clear that the rider must indeed balance both his body and his emotions. Interestingly, and uniquely to this text, the aspect of emotional equilibrium is not primarily discussed in terms of the correctness of riding, although this is clearly implied. Emotional balance is instead discussed according to the morality of riding and to the piety of the rider. In this section, the text explains that the horse was one of God's favourite creatures because study of the Bible reveals that God repeatedly chose the horse in particular both to serve and to glorify Him. That mankind was given the horse to use in exactly the same way (to serve and to glorify) constituted a tremendous gift from God.¹⁸ All the more important, therefore, was the responsibility of man to act as the wise and virtuous steward over such a gift.¹⁹ All the more damning, therefore, in the eyes of God, the text continues, was any kind of abuse of these magnificent creatures. To beat, whip or spur a horse out of anger, for example, was a sign of arrogance and pride; it was cruelty born out of a total lack of mercy, all of which constituted the most serious sins man could commit against his heavenly Father.²⁰ By contrast, to ride a horse as the *Pferdt-Schatz*

¹⁸ *Pferdt-Schatz* Part I 146–147.

¹⁹ *Pferdt-Schatz* Part I 3.

²⁰ *Pferdt-Schatz* Part I 140.

strives to instruct, whereby the rider treats the horse fairly, kindly and gently and works for the good of the animal, are the actions of a man living in accordance with God's will.

The ultimate demonstration of all of these abilities and qualities – the physical skill, the theoretical knowledge, the emotional equilibrium with its attendant moral rectitude – was the horse and rider's performance of the particularly difficult movements constituting the so-called "Hohe Schule" or High School of riding. These movements, which are illustrated and explicated in the *Pferdt-Schatz*, all involve the horse leaping off the ground in various modes of self-propulsion. Not all horses were suited for this rigorous physical display, but a horse that could manage these moves was living proof not only of its own strength and intelligence but also of its rider's talent and skill. The basic position, from which all of these leaps develop in the course of their execution, is the levade. In this position, the horse shifts its weight back onto its hindquarters, balancing itself – and its rider – on lowered hocks while the forelegs are suspended above the ground. In order to assume and then hold this position, the horse must possess a tremendous amount of strength in its hindquarters, back and abdomen, a keen sense of balance and a steady and tractable nature. In short, the horse exhibits the same desirable traits as the rider: strength, skill, understanding and balance.

Viewed within the context of this information provided by the text, Metzger and Thelott's title-page illustration makes much more sense. The classicizing architectural elements – the coffered archways and barrel vault, the entablature ornamented with dentils and the fluted pilasters – can be understood as a reference to the venerable antiquity of the art of riding. Even the stone plinth with its crumbling edges and chiselled inscription calls to mind ancient monuments that have managed to exist into the present. This classicizing and monumental architectural backdrop, even if it is not altogether spatially convincing, also serves subtly to remind the reader of Pluvinet; Crispijn de Passe's engraved illustrations to the French riding master's text often frame the equestrian action within or in front of a splendid, often classicized architectural setting [Fig. 3].

In fact, Metzger and Thelott have been rather specific in their reference to Pluvinet. Interestingly, their figures of the horse and rider, who together perform a levade, are not taken from the illustration of Pluvinet that describes the same movement, although this might seem to

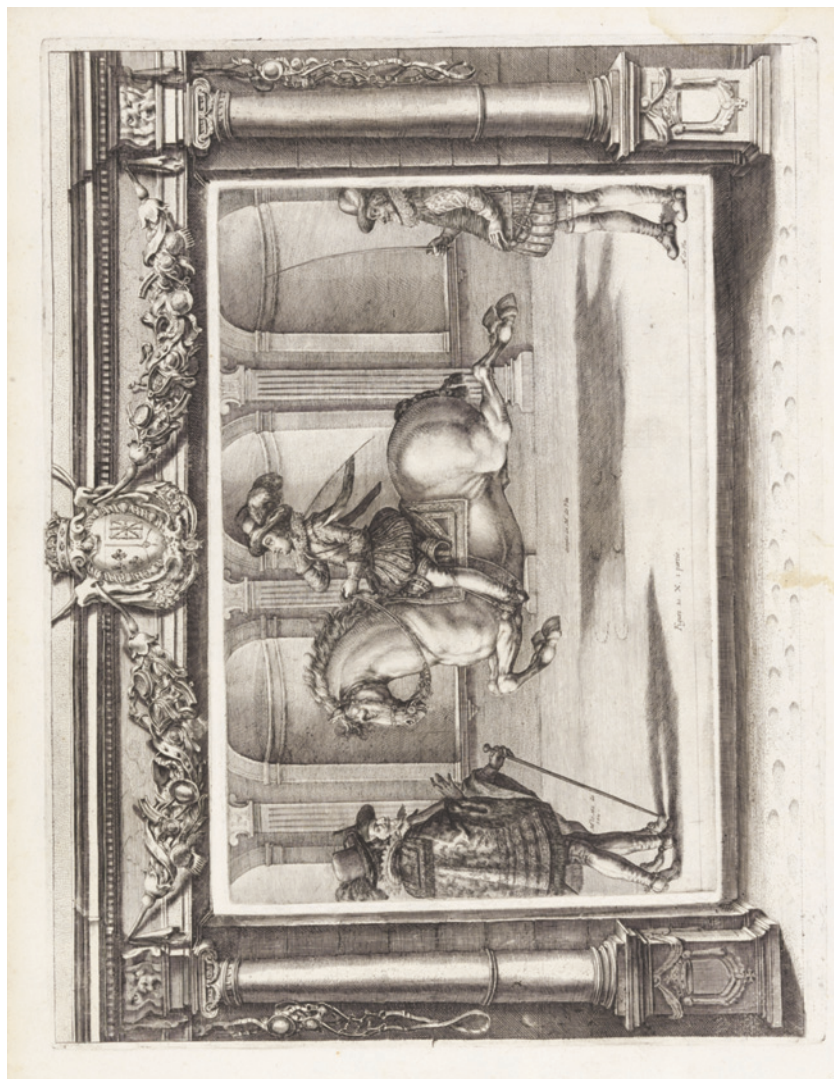


Fig. 3. Crispijn de Passe, Illustration to Antoine de Pluvinet, *Manège royal où l'on peut remarquer le défaut et la perfection du chevalier en tous les exercices de cet art* [...] (Paris, Guillaume Le Noir: 1624), part I, fig. 21.

have been the logical thing to do. Instead, Metzger and Thelott turned to figure 12 of *Le Maniege Royal*, featuring the Count of Soissons teaching his horse to perform a courbette from the levade [Fig. 4]. Crispijn de Passe's engraving clearly informs the *Pferdt-Schatz* title illustration; the pose of both horses and riders is almost identical. Yet Metzger and Thelott have given the figures of horse and rider a monumentality that de Passe's do not achieve by plucking them out of de Passe's overly crowded scene of insouciant courtiers, placing them directly in the middle of the composition and elevating them atop the stone plinth. In addition, Metzger and Thelott have managed to infuse their figures with an enlivening sense of drama; their horse's mane blows more noticeably and vigorously to the right than de Passe's; their rider's cape and horse's tail billow energetically out to the left, while the tail of de Passe's horse and the clothing of his rider politely obey the laws of gravity and remain where you would expect to find them. In addition, Metzger and Thelott's horse and rider both direct their gazes upwards, as if harkening to some higher calling, while the count and his rather shifty-eyed horse simply glance off to the left. The more intense contrast between light and dark in the German engraving also serves to augment the scene's sense of drama. This noticeable interest in visual drama, perhaps as well as a desire not to slavishly imitate Pluvinel/de Passe may explain why Metzger and Thelott rejected de Passe's illustration of the levade, featured in static and perfect profile, and instead chose as their model the illustration of the courbette, rendered from a more striking perspective.

In other words, Metzger and Thelott have borrowed de Passe's figures without stealing them outright. Through making enough subtle changes here and there, Metzger and Thelott have dodged the charge of visual piracy and yet, for those who would have been familiar with Pluvinel and who paid careful heed to the illustrations, the resonance between the two images would have been utterly discernible. And maybe that was even the point. Far from trying to disguise their borrowing, the artists allowed the connection to resonate because, like the reference to antiquity, the reference to Pluvinel aided in establishing a certain lineage and legitimacy for the content of the *Pferdt-Schatz*.

Because Metzger and Thelott's image of the horse and rider together performing the levade made for such a dramatic, lively and dynamic moment, it functioned especially well as an attractive title-page illustration, serving to entice potential buyers and readers of the book. The image also signalled an important section of the book's content,



Fig. 4. Crispin de Passe, etching/engraving illustration to Antoine de Pluvinet, *Manège royal où l'on peut remarquer le défaut et la perfection du chevalier en tous les exercices de cet art [...]* (Paris, Guillaume LeNoir: 1624), part I, fig. 12.

namely, a discussion of how to perform these highly difficult movements of the “Hohe Schule” based, as they are, on the correct execution of the levade. For example, the *Pferd-Schatz*, like Pluvinel, discusses and illustrates the courbette [Figs. 4 and 5]. The French aren’t the only ones who can hop around on their horses; the Germans can too, and the rider of the *Pferd-Schatz* illustration can do it even without the aid of the whip and one arm held casually akimbo. What *sprezzatura*! In the title-page illustration, the emotionless visage of the rider and the thoughtful expression of the horse, as they attain this breathtaking moment of reciprocal balance based on mutual trust and understanding, convey the text’s emphasis on the rider’s emotional equilibrium and his God-given responsibility to treat his horse fairly and kindly.

I have been arguing that Metzger and Thelott’s title-page engraving is far more than just a simple illustration. Instead, I see the references to classical antiquity and to Pluvinel, and the pose and expression of horse and rider that are constructed and combined in the image, functioning as a system of “visual aids;” they provide the reader with important cues about what he will find in the book if he hasn’t already read it, and about what he found in the book if he already has. In addition, a further function of the image’s visual elements, including its implementation of equestrian iconography, is to provide visual cues in aid of the fashioning of ideal identities, namely of the rider, the reader and the artist.

The identity of the rider is perhaps the most straightforward to articulate. Someone, who has bought the book because he is interested in honing or advancing his riding skills, would surely be encouraged to take the title-page horseman as a model. Without a frown or a drop of sweat, simply by a gentle tap with the whip, this superior rider enables his powerful yet cooperative mount to perform at the highest level, thus manifesting the epitome of horsemanship. Even if his own horsemanship were not up to that level, this reader/rider could fantasize about attaining such skill or he could pretend that he already had. Perhaps this rider/reader also enjoyed recognizing the visual references to Pluvinel, whose volume might have also graced his shelves.

But I wonder whether there weren’t other kinds of readers involved here, readers who might have bought the book without necessarily the intention to hurry out past the stable block and into the *manège* to try out the techniques they would have just read about. Perhaps they didn’t even have access to a *manège* ring much less own one. Perhaps



Fig. 5. Illustration to Christoph Metzger and Johann Philipp Thelott, *Vollkommener ergänzter Pferd-Schatz [...]* (Frankfurt am Main, Thomas Götze: 1664), illustration 18.

they bought the book because they enjoyed the illustrations. In terms of their implementation of equestrian iconography, these engraved illustrations were similar to paintings, manuscript illuminations, tapestries and statues, but even within the bindings of this voluminous book would have been more affordable than these much more costly media. These illustrations would have provided this reader with visual entertainment, a sense of owning "art," and also a clearer understanding of what he saw other riders doing that would enable him to comment on and discuss those actions with others. Here the function would be more like an enthusiast reading the sports page and memorizing sports statistics but without necessarily spending actual time on the baseball diamond or the soccer pitch because talk about sport constitutes such a fundamental component of gender- and (in this case) class-specific discourse. The title-page illustration could offer this reader, who perhaps was not even a member of the nobility, strictly speaking, nonetheless the trappings of that life-style, complete with grand architecture, magnificent horse, equestrian skill and a detailed image that replicated more expensive media illustrating all of the above. He too could fantasize about being that mounted man, since equestrian iconography, going back to antiquity, sent a clear, unmistakable signal about the wealth, power and prestige of a man on horseback. If he were educated, this reader could feel affirmed in his knowledge by recognizing the classical elements not only of the roots of that iconography, but also of the depicted architecture and by reading about what familiar ancient authors wrote about horsemanship. This information he could use as well in his conversation with others like him.

Here it must be stated that getting at the actual readership of the *Pferdt-Schatz* and of other horsemanship manuals is challenging because relevant information about price and edition size is not easily accessible. Nonetheless, there are a number of clues that allow for informed speculation about the kinds of readers and owners. First of all, a certain kind of evidence is furnished by the books themselves and this evidence points primarily to educated, affluent audiences including members of the nobility. We have already noted the stated emphasis in the *Pferdt-Schatz* on riding as especially appropriate for the nobility. Dedicated to a member of the nobility, Anton Günther, Count of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, who was himself a passionate breeder of horses, the *Pferdt-Schatz* is over 400 pages in length

and richly illustrated.²¹ The text is dense with Biblical and classical quotations and citations. Another horsemanship manual that I will discuss below, Georg Simon Winter's *Wolberittener Cavallier* (*The Well-Mounted Gentleman*, Nuremberg: 1678) is somewhat shorter – 191 pages and 115 engravings/etchings – but here too the emphasis points at least to a court milieu. As stated on its title-page, the objective of Winter's book is to provide information for use in instructing a young 'Cavallier' in the 'adelichen Exercitien zu Roß' (noble equestrian exercises). In this case, the reader/owner would include the court riding master as well as potentially his pupils.

Despite the books' marked emphasis on the nobility, there are indications that the culture of horses, which would include – to varying degrees – owning books on horsemanship and making conversation about the breeding, training and riding of horses, extended beyond the nobility and down into somewhat lower social groups. The *Pferdt-Schatz* discusses in detail how there are many different types of – and many different uses for – horses, for many different kinds of people, ranging from the nobility through every rank of society down to the humble ploughman and carter.²² Winter, a commoner, offers no specific information about the social status of the court riding masters, who would logically be the primary audience for his text.²³ In his *Von der Gestütere* (Frankfurt: 1584), Marx Fugger (whose branch of the family was granted hereditary nobility only several decades earlier in the sixteenth century) insists that the acquisition, breeding and training of quality horses is an extremely expensive and time-consuming matter, yet he explicitly addresses his remarks exclusively to a socially unspecified audience of 'gutte Gesellen' (good fellows), who all share a love for horses and an interest in horsemanship. Furthermore, he mentions that even if someone is unable to ride his own horse at a

²¹ For Anton Günther, Count of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst (1583–1667) see Lübking H., "Anton Günther, Graf von Oldenburg", in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* I (Berlin: 1953) 317.

²² The discussion of the more humble use of the horse is found in section 5 of the first part titled "Der Pferde gemein Gebrauch und Notturfft/worin sie allerley Ständen diestlich", *Pferdt-Schatz* Part I 131–140.

²³ See note 29.

skillful level, he should still be able to enjoy watching someone else who can.²⁴

Thus, the readers/riders addressed by these books, and those who actually owned and/or read them or other books like them, might well have belonged to a range of social groups that included people who in fact did not hold noble rank. Although their social status might in reality have differed, these readers would be united in their common embrace of the (in some cases actually and/or physically unattainable) ideal identity as consummate horseman and refined gentleman.

Finally the title-page illustration also offers the ideal identity of the artist. And here we have come full circle back to the engraving and its producers. It is both naïve and short-sighted to dismiss Metzger and Thelott's image, as I initially did, either merely as decoration or as bad art. Their image actually offers plentiful evidence of ambitious illustrators who were also capable to a certain degree. Not only does the image capture and weave together so many key concepts of the text, it also combines the most important elements reproduced in two-dimensional media: landscape, architecture, the figure and technically challenging passages of foreshortening. And here I would like to emphasize especially the figure of the horse as a powerful signifier of artistic identity. We have seen that, in the case of the title-page horse in particular, Metzger and Thelott derived the figure from Crispijn de Passe. But we know that already in the sixteenth century certain artists wrote, illustrated and had published booklets that sought to teach all manner of other artists and artisans how to fashion the figure of a horse in different poses and from different vantage points.²⁵ The existence of these books, coupled with the numerous equestrian themes featured in early modern visual imagery, indicate how professionally vital was an artist's command of the equine figure. As evidenced from these demonstration booklets, however, training in equine iconography often involved a formulaic – rather than a fundamental – grasp of

²⁴ Fugger, *Von der Gestütterey* fols. 19r–v, 23v.

²⁵ Artists' manuals that deal (also) with the equine figure are: Sebald Beham, *Dises buchlein zeyget an und lernet ein maß oder proporcion der Ross* [...] (Nuremberg: 1528); Erhard Schön, *Underweisung der Proportion und stellung der bossen* [...] (Nuremberg, Christoff Zell: 1542); and Heinrich Lautensack, *Des Circkels unnd Richtscheits/ auch der Perspectiva und Proportion der Menschen und Rosse*/[...] *underweisung* [...] (Frankfurt a. M., Sigmund Feyerabend: 1563). See Cuneo P.F., "Beauty and the Beast: Art and Science in Early Modern European Equine Imagery", *Journal of Early Modern History* 4, 3–4 (2000) 274–293.

the equine figure that was based on the manipulation of geometric patterns and mathematical ratios and on the copying of figurative models. While such a formulaic approach certainly facilitated the production of multiple illustrations needed for the augmentation of a book, its implementation, as well as the persistence of specific iconographic traditions, should make us cautious about viewing these illustrations as if they were akin to neutral technical photos. The production of book illustration by artists also raises the question of how much these image professionals actually knew about the finer points of horsemanship their illustrations might have been meant to convey. Nonetheless, Metzger and Thelott's title-page horse in dramatically foreshortened levade served to demonstrate the competence and even the bravado of the book's illustrators.

Identities of rider, reader and artist are constructed in very similar ways in an engraving from a later seventeenth-century horsemanship manual, except that for the rider, the identity constructed is an anti-model. I will therefore focus on how the image and its visual aids mobilize notions of horsemanship that pertain in particular to the reader as rider. Because the antithesis of the ideal identity is presented in this image, it provides an effective pendant to Thelott and Metzger's title-page engraving. Both images promulgate the same values but do so by opposite means. The later engraving also provides a useful example of how an image can provide additional and powerful information that does not specifically appear in the text. It is a mistake to assume that every text/image relationship is one in which the image slavishly illustrates only what the text dictates.

The image in question appears in Winter's *Wolberittener Cavallier* and shows an ill-mounted gentleman; in fact, he is in the process of falling off his horse [Fig. 6].²⁶ This is a highly unusual image because the subject matter is hardly ever illustrated. The engraving, by Cornelius Nicolaes Schurtz (signed in the lower left corner), represents a unique innovation in equestrian iconography, which almost always represents the rider firmly and confidently seated upon his horse's back.²⁷ The

²⁶ Winter Georg Simon, *Wolberittener Cavallier* (Nuremberg, Wolfgang Moritz Ender: 1678). See Cuneo, "Körpertechnik des Reitens" and "Kultur des Reitens" 180–183 and 339.

²⁷ Only Schurtz's name is to be seen on the illustration, but others in Winter's book are also signed by Peter Troschel. For Troschel, see *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden*



Fig. 6. Cornelis Nicolaes Schurtz, illustration to Georg Simon Winter, *Wolberittener Cavallier* (Nuremberg, Wolfgang Moritz Endter: 1678), part 1, chapter 4, illustration V.

exception to the usually well-mounted riders in visual imagery can be found in emblems where falling riders are represented in connection with vices such as pride and lack of self-control. Considered within the context of such emblems, Schurtz's engraving may very well also resonate with a moralizing message.²⁸

Schurtz's image conveys a narrative. Two men have been riding their horses along the outer perimeter of a wall that seems to enclose a grand palace. Upon reaching one corner where two perpendicular sections of the wall join, the first rider (in the right half of the image) has run into trouble. Something has happened to cause him to fall backward off his horse. Perhaps the horse had shied suddenly at something it had heard behind the wall. As the rider plummets towards earth, the horse displays visible signs of agitation: it swishes its tail vigorously, raises its head high upon a tense neck, pricks its ears alertly in the direction of the wall and picks up its hind leg with a powerful motion. The second rider, in the left half of the image, watches what has happened and will have to attend to manoeuvring his mount away from the falling rider whose swift and violent trajectory is going to place him directly in the path of the second rider's oncoming horse.

When this image is compared with the text that accompanies it, it is clear that the image conveys much more information than is given in the commentary. The book was written by Georg Simon Winter (c. 1629–1701), a horseman who held positions at a number of German courts as well as the Danish court of Christian V (reigned as king of Denmark and Norway 1670–99).²⁹ The engraving appears in the fourth chapter of the book's first section, which is dedicated to the instruction of 'grossen Herren oder Cavaliers' (important lords or gentlemen) in the art of riding. In Chapter Four Winter describes in great detail how the pupil is to achieve the correct position while mounted on the horse. He also warns that if the pupil adopts an incorrect position, namely by thrusting his legs too far out in front, his entire body will

Künstler, vol. XXXIII/XXXIV 431–432; for Schurtz, see Bartum G. (ed.), *Hollstein's German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts 1400–1700*, vol. LIV (Rotterdam: 2001) 91–262.

²⁸ See Henkel A. – Schöne A. (eds.), *Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: 1967) vol. I, 506; II, 1072, 1662.

²⁹ For information on Georg Simon Winter, see Henn A., *Über die pferdeheilkundliche Handschrift des Joachim Christoph Zachen aus dem 18. Jahrhundert nebst einer Würdigung des Georg Simon Winter von Adlersflügel*, Inaugural Dissertation, Veterinary Medicine (Berlin: 1999) 276–282.

fall out of the proper alignment, resulting in the likelihood that the rider will fall out of the saddle even at the horse's slightest misstep. At this point, the reader is directed to study the illustration in question, and the text resumes by addressing a different subject altogether, namely the rider's first lesson at the pillar.

The engraving illustrates neither the correct position of the rider in the saddle nor the incorrect one, both of which are described in specific detail in the text. Instead, it illustrates the potential consequences of the latter, which in the text is only generally described as falling off. The engraving serves to round out the laconic text by literally offering a picture of what that might look like, of visualizing what may happen when the pupil falls off his horse. It is not a pretty sight. First of all, there is the physical danger involved. In the image, the falling rider has not yet reached the ground but the moment of contact is imminent. Because his body is parallel to the ground as he is forcefully propelled backwards, that contact is going to feature the smack of the pupil's head against the hard-packed dirt ground. Not only may the rider suffer a serious, perhaps even fatal head injury from such a fall, but lying flat out on the ground will also put him in danger of being inadvertently trampled or kicked by his own horse and/or the mount of the second rider, who is, according to the text, most likely to be identified as the riding master.

Falling off one's horse imperilled not only life and limb, but also reputation. Winter's book is written at least in part for riding masters, whose job it is to instruct courtiers and/or gentlemen in the art of riding, and may also have been used by such pupils themselves for further reference. For a courtier or a gentleman, whose position in the court/social hierarchy depended in large part on such matters as his skill at horsemanship, fencing, dancing and other such physical activities, losing one's balance and falling off one's horse meant losing face and falling from favour. The image addresses also these dangers by displaying the rider precisely at the most ungraceful and embarrassing moment: as he flies wigless and hatless through the air, his limbs flung inelegantly asunder, his face and his fingers rigidly contorted in fear. The rider has not only lost control of his horse but also of his body and his composure. Adding to the embarrassment is the fact that there are witnesses to this physically and emotionally humiliating scene: the riding master, and the reader/viewer.

In every way, Schurtz's incompetent and compromised pupil is the exact opposite of Metzler and Thelott's masterful and consummate

rider – in every way, that is, except function. Both images serve to instruct and motivate the viewer by visualizing specific identities that the viewer is encouraged to embrace (Metzler and Thelott) or reject (Schurtz). In both images, equestrian iconography plays a key role in communicating those identities, either in drawing on it to reinforce notions of appropriate authority and effective control or subverting it to illustrate the catastrophic consequences of inappropriate authority and ineffective control. The falling rider also serves to remind the viewer that mastering the art of riding is a difficult, even perilous, task. The awkward and dangerous trajectory traced by his falling body may also chart a rising estimation for those who remain firmly in the saddle while their horses execute the most difficult and exacting movements on command.

Riding skillfully and aesthetically was a form of physical display that members of courtly and genteel society were expected to both perform themselves and to evaluate in others. Books such as the *Pferdt-Schatz* and Winter's *Wolberittener Cavallier* were certainly responding to that estimation for the art of riding by providing information and inspiration in a different medium and as an alternative experience to lessons taught by riding masters. However, I argue that these books functioned in a number of ways. Key to all of their functions is the accompanying images. Far from acting as passive and direct mirrors of the text, the images synthesize, mobilize and even amplify what the text offers. Through visual strategies such as the manipulation of equestrian iconography, the images aid in training the reader to improve his riding; to augment the training of his horse; to recognize and affirm the classical, moral, and social ideals involved in riding; and to appreciate the artistry of the illustrations. In other words, the reader is aided in appropriating a courtly identity based ideally on the highest standards of morality, education (including in the classics and about art) and physical ability.³⁰ As is the case with the early modern horse, the

³⁰ For information regarding the nexus of education, riding, and noble ideals in early modern central Europe, see N. Conrads, "Tradition und Modernität im adeligen Bildungsprogramm der Frühen Neuzeit", in Schulze W. (ed.), *Ständische Gesellschaft und Mobilität* (Munich: 1988) 389–403; Heiß G., "Standeserziehung und Schulunterricht. Zur Bildung des Niederösterreichischen Adels in der Frühen Neuzeit", in *Adel im Wandel. Politik, Kultur, Konfession 1500–1700* (Horn: 1990) 390–427; Winkelbauer T., *Fürst und Fürstendiener. Gundaker von Liechtenstein, ein österreichischer Aristokrat des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Vienna-Munich: 1999) 226–233, 472–484; and Melton E., "Anpassung und Widerspruch im Herrschaftsverständnis: Wolf Helmhard von

likewise ubiquitous early modern illustration tends to appear invisible to the eyes of modern scholars. In fact, both horse and illustration served as essential vehicles for the demonstration and display of early modern ideals and identities.

Hohbergs (1612–1688)”, in Kaak H. – Schattkowsky M. (eds.), *Herrschaft. Machtentfaltung über adligen und fürstlichen Grundbesitz in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: 2003) 67–84.

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BIG MEN, SMALL HORSES:
RIDERSHIP, SOCIAL STANDING AND ENVIRONMENTAL
ADAPTATION IN THE EARLY MODERN PHILIPPINES

Greg Bankoff

Neither the horse nor the Spaniard was native to the Philippines. While the latter might come to the islands to make his destiny – find fortune, acquire land, gain status – the former was always an unwilling migrant with little choice in the matter. Both had to adapt to the new world they found themselves in, yet the conditions were very different from what they had known and the outcomes not what they might have expected. Above all, the conquistador liked to think of himself as a gentleman-soldier, a *caballero*, literally one who rides a horse, a *caballo*. The trouble was there were no horses in the archipelago – or, at least, not in those parts of it occupied by Spaniards in the late sixteenth century. Horses were hard to come by and had to be imported: the famed breeds of New Spain, let alone the metropole, were dangerously far away, so a source nearer to ‘home’ had to be found. The animal, however, responded to its altered circumstances and new environment by rapidly attenuating and within a century was barely able to support a fully grown European rider, in the process losing its iconic appeal. At the same time, its diminished size and steady gait made it a perfect means of locomotion for the indigenous rural population who readily adopted it for transport and as a beast of burden.

The Philippines may have been a rough and ready frontier society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, yet its capital, Manila, waxed wealthy on the galleon trade and had grown into a fine stone city of considerable dimensions and even greater pretensions during the decades of liberal policies and before the devastating earthquake of 1645. This chapter explores how man and beast acclimatised to a tropical setting that conspired to undermine and circumvent the prestige and social standing of the coloniser, ridiculing one of the most cherished symbols of Iberian hubris, the *caballero*. Big men and small horses, large egos and great hearts make for a Renaissance tale where ridership and social standing were as much a matter of environmental adaptation as ‘good breeding’.

The Spanish Gentleman and His Steed

The Spanish nobility, the *caballeros hidalgos*, retained a close association with horse and arms for far longer than did the elite elsewhere in western Europe. Apart from the *grandees* or high nobility, the urban patriciate of the Iberian peninsular remained stubbornly military in nature, while their counterparts in the great cities of Europe from Lombardy to Flanders were evolving into more mercantile aristocracies.¹ But the role of heavy cavalry, hitherto the preserve of the nobility, was being undermined in the sixteenth century by developments in warfare: gun-bearing infantry defended by barriers and trenches; new forms of fortifications and siege-craft; and the appearance of the *pistoleer*, a light cavalryman armed with a pistol. Even if the cavalry persisted into the following century, and staged something of a comeback as a result of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden's reforms, nobilities were forced to reconsider the very essence of *noblesse*, the ideals and traits that comprised noble status.

As the influence of the Italian Renaissance spread northward, the characteristics of the noble courtier, one who epitomised *grazia* (grace) and *sprezzatura* (nonchalance), found expression in a new form of horsemanship that provided occasion to demonstrate these same qualities: the *manège equitation* virtually defined gentlemanly status and sanctioned elite title.² While their counterparts in France and Italy were gradually foregoing more warlike pursuits by learning effortlessly to put their steeds through intricate and admittedly dangerous manoeuvres, their Spanish cousins still had need for overtly martial skills. They had also developed a unique style of horsemanship, *a la jinete*, modelled on their Muslim adversaries during the medieval *Reconquista* and suited to frontier warfare, comprising rapid movement and small marauding bands. It was characterised by short stirrups, a fairly low saddle and a palate-bit that enabled the rider to turn his horse far more quickly than by pulling at the sides of the mouth.³

¹ Lourie E., "A Society Organized for War: Medieval Spain", *Past and Present* 35 (1996) 65.

² Tucker T., "Early Modern French Noble Identity and the Equestrian 'Airs Above the Ground'", in Raber K. – Tucker T. (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World*, (New York: 2005) 280–282.

³ Denhardt R., "The Horse in New Spain and the Borderlands", *Agricultural History* 25, 4 (1951) 145; Lourie, "A Society Organized for War" 69.

The conquistadors brought their steeds, along with their riding techniques and their *hubris*, to the Americas. Horses sailed in the holds of the ships on Christopher Columbus's second expedition to Hispaniola in 1493 and horses, especially mares, seem to have been sent with most subsequent fleets for the next thirty years.⁴ The horse was an important weapon in the Spanish arsenal and proved decisive at crucial moments of the conquest of New Spain. A cavalry charge, for example, saved the battle of Otompan (Otumba) in July 1520 and allowed Hernán Cortés to extricate what remained of his army and retire to the coast to fight another day. Having helped in the initial subjugation of native peoples, the horse played an even more vital role in the consolidation and expansion of the colonial state during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as ranching spread ever northwards into what is now northern Mexico and south-western USA and southward into the pampas of Argentina and Chile.⁵ Steps were taken early to increase the number of horses. The Crown established royal breeding farms as early as 1499 and the great conquistador himself, Cortés, was a substantial horse breeder and owned a stud farm in the Valley of Oaxaca.⁶

The Philippines was one step further into the unknown, another ocean away from Spain, and, like Mexico, a horse-less land. Cortés and his army may have been continually constrained by a shortage of cavalry but at least he had horses and the Caribbean islands, where the animal had already been successfully introduced, near at hand to draw upon for resupply.⁷ The name of his beloved charger, Morzillo, has even come down through history. Imagine with what shock, then, Francisco de Sande recorded how in 1576 the first Spanish governor of the Philippines, the archipelago's conquistador, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, was forced to go 'afoot, because there were no horses'!⁸ If ten years after the establishment of a Spanish colony in the islands, its governor still found it hard to procure a mount, then horses were surely very scarce. The problem was that supply lines stretched back across the Pacific and while the voyage from Acapulco to Manila was

⁴ Johnson J., "The Introduction of the Horse into the Western Hemisphere", *Hispanic American Historical Review* 23, 4 (1943) 588–589, 593.

⁵ Nichols M., "The Spanish Horse of the Pampas", *American Anthropologist* 4, 1 (1939) 119–129.

⁶ Johnson, "The Introduction of the Horse" 595; Denhardt, "The Horse in New Spain" 147.

⁷ Johnson, "The Introduction of the Horse" *passim*.

⁸ Sande, Francisco de, "Relation of the Filipinas Islands, 1576", in Blair E. – Robertson A. (eds.), *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898* (Mandaluyong: 1973) vol. IV, 72.

nothing like as arduous or as long as the outbound trip from Manila, it still took 79 to 122 days.⁹ That was a long time for a horse to be at sea. Moreover, the galleons depended on the north-east trade winds for their westward passage and they varied seasonally. A ship approaching the Philippines before the end of June could anticipate an easier voyage than in subsequent months when it would usually encounter heavier weather associated with tropical convective systems.¹⁰

Some horses were, indeed, transported across the Pacific. Repeated royal injunctions were made encouraging the trade. Philip II instructed the Viceroy of Nueva España in 1589 to provide the new Governor-general of the Philippines, Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, with twelve mares and two stallions 'in order that they may be bred there in numbers'.¹¹ Despite the apparent desire for fine horses, there is little direct evidence to suggest that horses were landed in any number, at least in the first century of Spanish colonisation.¹² Given the length and nature of the voyage, this is hardly surprising. Great care had to be taken to minimise harm to the animal (especially broken legs) from rolling ships. Horses, too, are unable to vomit as a palliative to seasickness and the resulting condition, colic, is painful and can often be fatal. Many horses were transported across the Atlantic, a significantly shorter passage that averaged only 59 days between 1550 and 1650.¹³ Nonetheless, fatalities might be as high as 50 per cent. On smaller craft, horses stood on deck the entire voyage, sidelined or hobbled in fair weather and lashed down during storms. In larger vessels, they were kept below deck, suspended from the beams in hammocks that stretched under their chests and with only their hind feet touching the floor. The doldrums, the inter-tropical convergence zone near the

⁹ García R. *et al.*, "Atmospheric Circulation Changes in the Tropical Pacific Inferred from the Voyages of the Manila Galleons in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries", *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 82, 11 (2001) 2444. On the difficulties of the crossing, particularly the outbound passage from Manila described as the "longest and most dreadful voyage of any in the world", see Schurz W., *The Manila Galleon* (New York: 1939).

¹⁰ Bankoff G., "Winds of Colonisation: The Meteorological Contours of Spain's Imperium in the Pacific, 1521–1898", *Environment and History* 12, 1 (2006) 75.

¹¹ Felipe II, "Instructions from Felipe II to Governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, 9 August 1589", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. VII, 156.

¹² Mackie D., "Philippine Horses", *Journal of Hereditary* 7, 8 (1916) 380.

¹³ García R. *et al.*, "Reconstructing the North Atlantic Atmospheric Circulation in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries from Historical Sources", *Climate Research* 14 (2000) 149.

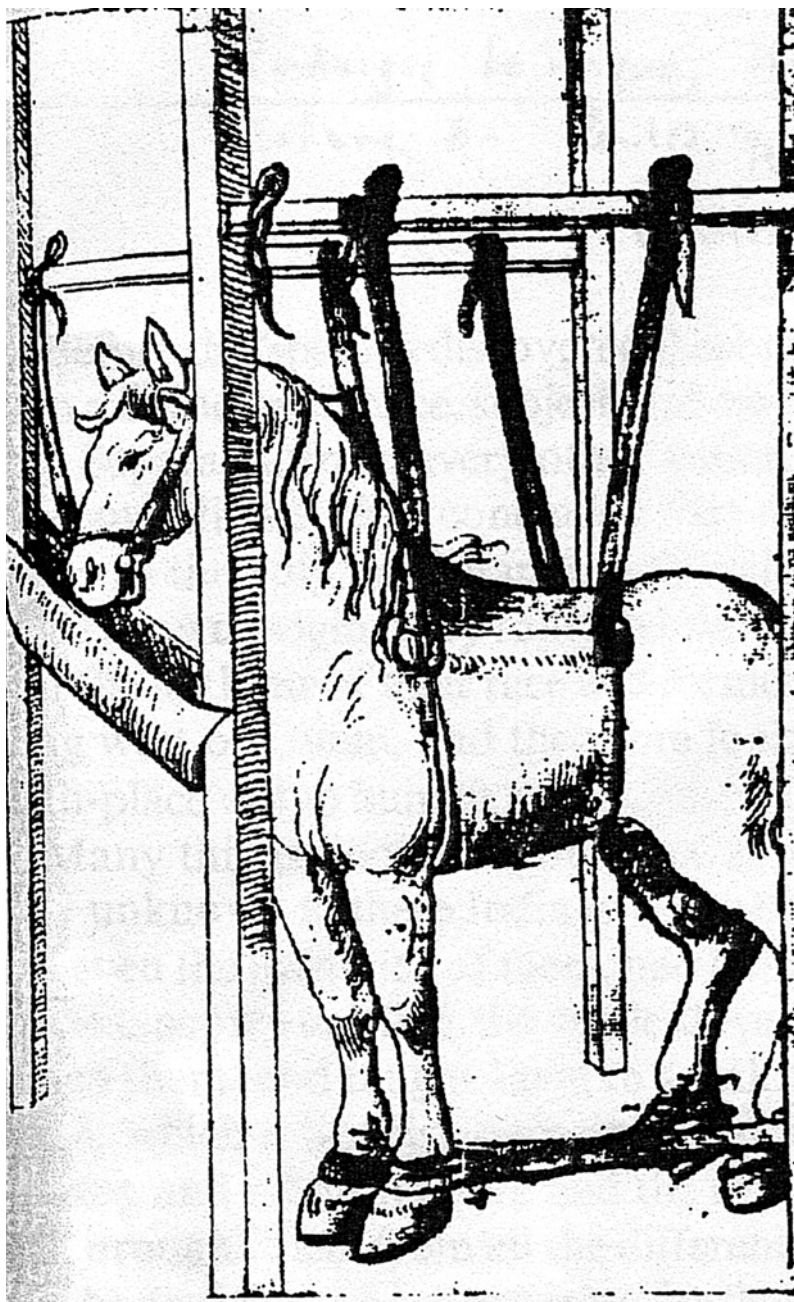


Fig. 1. Captain Pedro Sánchez Pericón's horse aboard ship, 1567. © with permission of Rodrigue Lévesque from *History of Micronesia: A Collection of Source Documents* (Gatineau: Lévesque Publications, 1992) vol. II, 295.

equator, where a vessel might be becalmed for weeks, are reputedly known as the 'horse latitudes' due to the number of animals thrown overboard as water supplies failed.¹⁴ Transporting horses over vast stretches of water was always a risky and costly exercise.

The number of animals transported across the Pacific was much fewer but there is one such description written by a private soldier, Juan Martínez, who sailed on the relief expedition to the new colony in the Philippines under the command of Pedro Sánchez Pericón in 1567. The captain decided to take his horse with him. A drawing depicts the animal held in the bow of the ship by a hammock about his belly that was attached at each quarter to overhead beams, with his fetlocks hobbled front to back [Fig. 1]. His head was also secured on both sides over an improvised canvas or leather food trough. However, as thirst and mutiny gripped the crew, the horse was attacked one 'midnight' and a dagger thrust through his heart.¹⁵ The long voyage had other perils in wait as well, including storms and shipwreck, the fate that overcame the *Santa Margarita* and its cargo of "horses, sheep, goats, and cats" off the coast of Guam in 1601.¹⁶

Repeated royal directives to send more horses were apparently just as frequently ignored despite their close association with social standing.¹⁷ There are several possible, if unsubstantiated, reasons to explain this apparent anomaly. Laws passed between 1591 and 1604 to regularise the galleon trade, for instance, restricted the annual number of ships arriving in Manila to two and initially limited their size to 300 tons.¹⁸ Pound for pound, equine flesh may have proved less profitable to transport than other merchandise, taking up valuable cargo space and requiring extensive and bulky provender to keep it alive

¹⁴ Denhardt, "The Horse in New Spain" 146.

¹⁵ Martínez Juan, "Report Made to Legazpi by a Private Soldier, Juan Martínez, and dated Cebu 25 July 1567", in Lévesque R. (ed.), *History of Micronesia: A Collection of Source Documents, Volume 2 Prelude to Conquest, 1561–1595* (Gatineau, Quebec: 1992) 294–295.

¹⁶ Chirino Pedro, "Relación de las Islas Filipinas, Rome 1604", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XII, 119.

¹⁷ Tello Francisco, "Letter from Governor Don Francisco Tello to the King, Manila, 12 July 1599", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. X, 263; Felipe III, "Instructions to Pedro de Acuña, Zamora, 16 February 1602", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XI, 286.

¹⁸ Needless to say, such limits were often breached and all forms of subterfuge resorted to so as to increase the quantity of cargo carried. Still, a horse is somewhat difficult to hide. Schurz, *The Manila Galleon passim*.

(and saleable) on the long voyage. If the 'economics of space' were not sufficient to deter the most determined of merchants, other risks required appraisal. Many animals must have died during the passage across the Pacific. Moreover, of the 108 sailings made between 1565 and 1815, 30 vessels were lost either to shipwreck or capture. Finally, by the agreement of Tordesillas (1494) and Zaragoza (1529), sailing westward from the Philippines to the horse markets of India, Persia and the Middle East was forbidden despite the union of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns between 1580 and 1640.

Even so, the situation that reduced the governor and his trusted companions ('gentlemen who had nothing more to do than act as sentinels for him alone') to go afoot because of a lack of horses was intolerable. Instead, they had to be acquired from some other source, one closer to hand. The first mention of China as such a supplier is the arrival in 1576 of a Chinese fleet of ten ships in pursuit of a notorious corsair carrying thirteen horses, either as gifts or for trade. These mounts, however, were described in rather unflattering terms as 'full of bad habits, like those of Galicia'.¹⁹ Despite these less than enthusiastic initial reports, a memorial made to the royal council in 1586 urged his majesty 'to have many horses and cattle brought from China and Japon [sic]'.²⁰ The very next year, a fleet of more than 30 vessels 'of considerable burden' arrived from China laden with merchandise, including horses.²¹ 'Many horses' arrived in 1588, by which time such influxes had become an annual event with some 20 vessels arriving between November and May.²² By the 1590s, Chinese artisans resident in Manila were making bridles and stirrups 'of such good a quality and so cheaply that some merchants wish to load a cargo of these articles for Mexico'.²³ Still other horse-trappings, some only embroidered with glass beads and seed-pearls but others with pearls, rubies, sapphires and crystal stones, were imported directly from China.²⁴ Horses also

¹⁹ Sande, "Relation of the Filipinas Islands" 48.

²⁰ Santiago de Vera, "Memorial to the Council by Citizens of the Filipinas Islands, Manila 26 July 1586", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. VI, 171.

²¹ Santiago de Vera, "Letter to Felipe II, Manila 26 June 1587", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. VI, 302.

²² Salazar Domingo de, "Relation of the Philippine Islands, Manila 26 June 1588", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. VII, 34–35.

²³ Salazar Domingo de, "The Chinese and the Parián at Manila, 24 June 1590", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. VII, 227.

²⁴ Morga Antonio de, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipina, Mexico 1609", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XVI, 179.

arrived from other surrounding destinations. Santiago de Vera mentions the floundering of a Japanese vessel bound for Manila laden with flour and horses off the coast of Cagayan in 1587.²⁵ Some horses had travelled further, originating in Persia and Bengal despite the difficulties of such a trade.²⁶ By the time of Pedro Chirino's history of the Philippines in 1604, horses were no longer in such short supply and great stock farms had been established where horses were bred in large numbers.²⁷

To the Spaniard, the horse was a symbol of dignity and status, qualities innate to its equine nature. Anything that was conveyed by this means of locomotion benefited from the association. There are two events in particular during the first half century of the colony – the inauguration of the *real audiencia* or high court in 1598 and the festivities celebrating the accession of Philip IV in 1623 – that demonstrate how the horse was used to project the majesty and puissance of the state and the social standing and opulence of Spanish colonists. The first occasion involved the procession of the royal seal about the capital city, the ceremony to be conducted according to the precise instructions of Philip II, sent three years earlier. The welcome, the king stipulated, 'must follow the same procedure which would be observed in the reception of my royal person'. While the king was quite insistent on which officials should be present and where they should be stationed, the only precise instructions, as to dress, concerned the horse that was to bear the seal. It must be 'richly caparisoned', clothed with hangings made from brocade or silk bearing the royal arms on each side, and its face covered by a frontal of the same material.²⁸ In the event, the horse, a large gelding, was covered with a cloth of red velvet embroidered with the king's escutcheon and escorted by high dignitaries, who with bared heads surrounded it afoot.²⁹ On another occasion, a richly caparisoned horse, 'an excellent animal', came to stand

²⁵ Vera, "Letter to Felipe II" 304.

²⁶ Mackie, "Philippine Horses" 381. Timor is also mentioned as a source of supply. Wernstedt F. – Spencer J.E., *The Philippine Island World: A Physical, Cultural and Regional Geography* (Berkeley: 1978) 211.

²⁷ Chirino Pedro, "Relación de las Islas Filipinas, Rome 1604", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XII, 191.

²⁸ Felipe II, "The Audiencia of Manila Re-Established, 26 November 1595", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. IX, 190.

²⁹ Desquibel Pedro Hurtado, "Reception of Seal, Manila, 8 June 1598", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. X, 134; de Morga, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipin", vol. XVI, 134.

in place of the royal person. As a representative of the very majesty of Spain, a fine horse was presented by the Governor-general to the King of Cambodia in 1593 in exchange for the latter's princely gift of elephants.³⁰

While also a royal occasion, the festivities held in Manila on 4 January 1623 to mark the accession of Philip IV provided more of an opportunity to display *hidalguía*, both its martial aspects and the ostentatious display of wealth that denoted social standing. The city was in its heyday, its wealth and prosperity predicated on the lucrative galleon trade and its role as an entrepôt, its streets fronted by lofty and spacious houses, and its people of all classes, especially the Spaniards 'clad and gorgeously adorned in silks'.³¹ For this memorable event, the capital's squares and passageways were decked in finery and its inhabitants donned their best attire so that 'all the assembly appeared to be a priceless cluster of jewels, and everything by itself a precious gem set in a cluster'.³²

At the climax of the public celebrations in the *plaza mayor*, matadors fought twelve bulls and teams played four matches of *cañas*. Both 'sports' were designed to display manly valour and equestrian skill. In particular, the game of *cañas* involved teams of mounted gentlemen engaging in various contests that included charging one another with spears that were parried by their opponents' shields. In his depiction of the festivities, Diego de Rueda y Mendoza provided a detailed description not only of the sumptuous outfits worn by participants that day but also of the trappings of their mounts, the two being a mutually reinforcing statement of the social standing of the other. Thus, the thirty-two horses ridden in the *cañas* not only bore the arms of their owners on their saddlebows but 'all had rich, rare, and costly harnesses and headstall of gold and silver covered with precious stones, plumes, and sashes, in the utmost profusion'. The mounts of principal dignitaries were specifically mentioned: the governor's steed, a greyish horse 'of noble bearing' bore a fine cloth sewn with pearls and silver, an embroidered saddle with gilded stirrups and bit; the saddle of the *alcalde ordinario's* (city magistrate) horse, a lively black four-year-old,

³⁰ Dasmariñas Gómez Pérez, "Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas to the King of Camboja, 27 September 1593", in Blair – Robertson, vol. IX, 78.

³¹ Morga, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipina", vol. XVI, 143.

³² Rueda y Mendoza Diego de, "Royal Festivities at Manila, Manila 1 August 1625", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXII, 50.

was embroidered with gold and silver edgings; the bay of the royal *alferéz* (standard bearer) had a long, black, well-combed tail and mane, an embroidered saddle, and gilded or silvered stirrups, bit and spurs 'very beautiful and of great value'. Few, however, could compare with the sheer magnificence of the master-of-camp's great grey horse with his caparison: 'of great value [...] in the judgement of experienced persons, estimated at nine or ten thousand pesos', a truly fabulous sum for that time and place.³³

The horse, as much as the person, was a means of publicly displaying gentlemanly status in colonial society. Comparable attitudes have been noted of similar societies which have made of the horse a potent symbol of military supremacy not only through its martial attributes but also 'through its own natural imperialism'.³⁴ Both these examples testify to at least a limited (if unrecorded) trade in fine horses and/or their successful breeding in the colony. Though the numbers of such animals must have remained small in comparison with the total equine population, their very scarcity may have enhanced their value in terms of social standing.

A Renaissance Horse-story

There was only one small problem in this colonial reconstitution of *hidalguía* – the horse; it apparently did not share the same imperatives as its fellow colonist. The animal may have been associated with power, wealth and authority in Spanish eyes, a potent symbol with which to overawe native populations, but fine horses were difficult to transport from New Spain and the risks evidently came to outweigh the potential gains. Moreover, there was another factor that proved decisive in determining size and pedigree in the islands over which Spaniards had even less control: the animal's adaptation to the tropical environment ultimately confounded all attempts to breed big horses.

The horse is not native to the Philippines and its presence in the islands both precedes and forms part of the Spanish conquest after 1565. Spaniards certainly considered that they had introduced the

³³ Rueda y Mendoza, "Royal Festivities at Manila", vol. XXII, 52–55, 59.

³⁴ Doniger W., "'I Have Scinde': Flogging a Dead (White Male Orientalist) Horse", *Journal of Asian Studies* 58, 4 (1999) 947.

animal as it was not present in those areas of the archipelago where they first settled. Etymological evidence supports this contention as there is no indigenously derived word for horse in any of the major language groups of the northern or central regions, the animal variously being called *kabayo* or *kabalyo*, a derivation of the Spanish *caballo*. In the south, however, among the Muslim inhabitants of the Sulu archipelago and parts of Mindanao (Magindanao), the Malay word *kuda* is used instead.³⁵ Further support for a distinct origin of this southern horse is provided by the traditional bit used by the Muslim populations that is entirely distinct from the one used by Spaniards – or by Chinese or Japanese. This southern horse most likely had its origins in islands further to the west where they were items of trade between the sultanates of Malacca, Johore, Brunei and Sulu during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³⁶ In other parts of the archipelago, though, the animal was first brought from New Spain and then, subsequently, in much greater numbers from China and Japan where they were successfully bred on great stock farms established by the religious orders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The religious orders played a key role in expanding the number of horses in the colony. In 1599, the accounts of the director of the hospital for natives list ten mares, four colts and one stallion among its livestock.³⁷ Chirino, writing in 1604, mentions the existence of ‘great stock-farms’ in relation to horses and mares.³⁸ Stallions kept for breeding commanded high prices. An interesting comparison between a horse bought for such purposes but which proved ‘of no use’ is listed in the records of the Manila Hospital in 1618: being bought for 400 pesos but resold for only 150 pesos.³⁹ Numbers had already increased to such an extent by 1689 that William Dampier reported the animal

³⁵ Scott W.H., *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: 1994) 278, n. 15.

³⁶ Mackie, “Philippine Horses” 374–376. Mackie claims to have been privy to a manuscript chronicle belonging to Hajji Butu, chief minister to the Sultan of Sulu that related such exchanges.

³⁷ Tello, “Letter from Governor”, vol. X, 276.

³⁸ Chirino, “Relación de las Islas Filipinas”, vol. XII, 191.

³⁹ “Memorial Regarding Manila Hospital, Manila 1618”, in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XVIII, 113.

plentiful on Luzon and feral on Mindanao.⁴⁰ Half a century later, horses are even mentioned in connection with the archipelago's commerce.⁴¹

Horses bred successfully in the Philippines but they were not the fine animals so sought after by Spaniards. David Mackie, an official in the U.S. Bureau of Agriculture in Manila, claimed to be able to identify five or perhaps six well defined types in 1916. First, a horse that favoured the Arab in some respects, the product he supposed of more careful breeding and most plentiful in the provinces longest settled.⁴² A second type resembled the thickset Chinese horse portrayed by Morga that was 'small, very strong, good goers, treacherous, quarrelsome, and bad-tempered'.⁴³ A third type, not often seen, similar to the Nambu breed of Japan, also described by Morga as having 'well shaped bodies, thick hair, large fetlocks, large legs...spirited, and of much mettle'.⁴⁴ A fourth, the most numerous type found in the islands, especially in rural areas, was without major distinguishing characteristics apart from a rather narrow chest, sloping croup, large hoofs and a tendency to cow-hock. Finally, a fifth, hardy, "stunted" mountain type of horse found mainly among tribal peoples, often little more than four feet high and 'the result of promiscuous breeding, poor food and little care'. Mackie also considered that the horses of Sulu and Mindanao might constitute a sixth type because of their distinctive origins.⁴⁵

Despite Mackie's preoccupation with pedigree, the various breeds of horses introduced to the islands interbred over the generations, blending the different equine ancestries to create a native horse as a distinctive breed. Early Spanish accounts depict these crossbreeds as medium sized, strong, vigorous and proven hard workers.⁴⁶ Certainly, regional variations were emerging: The provinces of Batangas and Pangasinan were considered to have the best horses; those in the Bicol region were 'more delicate, although better adapted to racing'; they were 'small but strong' in Ilocos; and rather wild in Jolo and Mindanao.⁴⁷ But

⁴⁰ Dampier William, "A New Voyage Round the World", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXXVIII, 282; vol. XXXVIII 39, 87.

⁴¹ Nicols, Nicholas, "Commerce of the Philippine Islands", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXXVII, 302.

⁴² Mackie, "Philippine Horses" 381.

⁴³ Morga, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipina", vol. XVI, 91.

⁴⁴ Morga, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipina", vol. XVI, 91.

⁴⁵ Mackie, "Philippine Horses" 382.

⁴⁶ Morga, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipina", vol. XVI, 90–91.

⁴⁷ Philippine Commission, *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President, January 31, 1900* (Washington D.C.: 1900), vol. IV, 13.

as the number of horses increased, apparently their size decreased. Forty years after Morga, an anonymous observer described the local breed as 'numerous' but 'small' and its diminutiveness became the dominant characteristic noted by most subsequent commentators.⁴⁸ Spanish measured horses in *cuartas*, the distance between a hand's outstretched thumb and little finger, regularised as a length of 21 centimetres. There are no actual measurements prior to the late nineteenth century but at that time an animal of between six and seven *cuartas* (1.26–1.47 metres) was considered of 'great height': there were few animals of this size and the majority were below six.⁴⁹ Later measurements confirm that the vast majority of the stock was small: 55.4 per cent under 50 inches (1.16 metres) and 96.6 per cent under 54 inches (1.25 metres).⁵⁰ That is to say, a noticeable adaptation of the horse to its new environment was its attenuation.

Human endeavour may have been responsible for introducing the horse to the islands but the resultant Philippine Horse was as much a "mix" of different equine genes as it was a product of the environmental conditions it encountered. Much was made of the poor nutritional value of available forage to sustain the proper development of colts and the health of mothers, and the complete absence of artificial pasturage so that there 'comes a time each year when what passes as fields are exhausted and droves of hungry and gaunt looking mares go in search of food that they are unable to find'.⁵¹ In particular, colts, badly fed in their first year of life, were enfeebled and especially susceptible

⁴⁸ "Early Franciscan Missions", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXXV, 299; An Englishman, "Remarks on the Philippine Islands, and on their Capital Manila, 1819 to 1822, Calcutta 1828", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. LI, 128; Vivit, E., *Reseña Estadística de las Islas Filipinas en 1845* (Barcelona: no date/post 1845) 30.

⁴⁹ Raza de Caballería de Filipinas, "Memoria Preliminar para la Ejecución del Proyecto de Renovación y Mejora de la Cria Caballar de Este Archipiélago", Philippine National Archive, Formento y Mejora, 1883. Spanish measurements are calculated from data given on horse measurements in both *cuartas* and metric calibrations. Raza de Caballería de Filipinas, "Inventario de los Cinco Caballos Arabes del Estado Que Existen en este Gobierno que por Orden del Exmo Sor. Gobor. Gral. del Archipiélago se Remiten a Disposición del Exmo. Sor. Director Gral. de Admon. Civil por Conducto del Vapor 'Elcano' 12 February 1890", Philippine National Archive, Formento y Mejora, 1890.

⁵⁰ "Live Stock and Poultry in the Philippines; Horses", *The Philippin Agricultural Review* 4 (1911) 479; Catalan N., "The Animal Problem of the Future Philippine Army", *Philippine Journal of Animal Industry* 2, 1 (1935) 71.

⁵¹ Raza de Caballería de Filipinas, "Memoria Preliminar".

to disease and mortality. The absence of natural pasturage and the lack of extensive grasslands meant that horses were mainly fed on a mixture of unhusked rice (*palay*) and maize, though, historically, 'green provender' or *camelote*, a long-leafed maize-like plant growing to a height of over two metres was often substituted for the latter, 'which keeps them very fat'.⁵² Attenuation, then, was a necessary physical adjustment to the sparse nutritional environment the animal encountered in the archipelago. Reduction in size is not such an uncommon occurrence for living forms faced with similar situations.⁵³ Nor did the size of the native horse of the Philippines differ appreciably from other breeds around maritime or mainland Southeast Asia.⁵⁴ Similar descriptions are given of horses on the important breeding island of Sumbawa, where the harshness of the local environment was both blamed for its diminutive stature and credited with its reputation for stamina and endurance.⁵⁵ Size, however, did prove an important factor in shaping attitudes towards local horses and in determining the animal's employment in the Philippines.⁵⁶

All reference to the larger, finer horses ceases in the seventeenth century. Whether this silence reflects the disappearance of such stock from the islands or is merely a quirk of the extant record is impossible to determine. But as the horse's size changed, so did its utility for certain human activities. As the animal acclimatised to the surrounding tropical environment, it began to play a more significant role in the economic life of the wider society. Even from the earliest days of the colony, royal orders had encouraged horse breeding among the

⁵² Morga, "Sucesos de las Islas Filipina", vol. XVI, 91.

⁵³ Tchernov E. – Horwitz L.K., "Body Size Diminution Under Domestication: Unconscious Selection in Primeval Domesticates", *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 10, 1 (1991) 54–75.

⁵⁴ Clarence-Smith W.G., "Horse Breeding in Mainland Southeast Asia and Its Borderlands", in Boomgaard P. – Henley D. (eds.), *Smallholders and Stock-breeders: Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: 2004) 189–210.

⁵⁵ Boers de Jong B., "Paardenfokkerij op Sumbawa (1500–1930)", *Spiegel Historiae*, 10/11, 32 (1997) 438–443; Boers de Jong B., "The 'Arab' of the Indonesian Archipelago: Famed Horse Breeds of Sumbawa", in Bankoff G. – Swart S. (eds.), *Breeds of Empire: The 'Invention' of the Horse in Maritime Southeast Asia and Southern Africa, 1500–1950* (Copenhagen: 2007) 51–64. See also the chapters on Javanese and Siamese horses written by Boomgaard P., Clarence-Smith W.G., Boers de Jong B., and na Pombejra D., *Breeds of Empire*, *passim*.

⁵⁶ Bankoff G., "A Question of Breeding: Zootechny and Colonial Attitudes towards the Tropical Environment in Late Nineteenth Century Philippines", *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, 2 (2001) 413–437.

indigenous population. Philip II's instructions to Governor Francisco Tello in 1596 had directed him to grant lands and homesteads for this purpose 'both to the Indians, and to the settlers and farmers'.⁵⁷ The stockmen on the great estancias, described as 'accustomed to the management of horses' were certainly mestizos or indigenous people. The Chinese, against whom these stockmen fought so desperately during the insurrection of 1640, were evidently mounted too.⁵⁸ Horse ownership was widespread by the end of the eighteenth century with many peasant families reportedly possessing more than one mount.⁵⁹

Unlike the carabao (*Bubalus bubalus*), however, the horse never came to play an important role in agriculture as its physique and its bodily kinetics rendered it unsuitable for employment in the thick mud of rice paddies. Instead, the animal's main utilitarian role was as a means of personal transport and light haulage. In particular, small horse carts known as *calesas* or *tartanillas*, much in evidence about public markets, were used extensively to carry groceries and similar loads, a task they still fulfil in provincial cities today. However, outside towns, the poor condition of the roads limited their deployment. On colonial Luzon, only three highways radiating from Manila in north-westerly, north-easterly and southerly directions linked the capital with other provinces. Even during the dry season, the sad state of repairs rendered 'whole sections next to impassable' and communications were virtually suspended during the wet from the mud and lack of bridges. Often, travellers were dependent on fragile bamboo rafts to cross swollen rivers, a hazardous venture at the best of times. As for byways, 'it need only be said that they are few...and, as a rule, in wretched condition'.⁶⁰

Alternatively, horses might serve as simple pack animals. In the countryside, larger landowners transported their produce to market during the dry season on *carromatas* or carts but poorer farmer used a dragged platform without wheels known as a *cangue* or *carrosa*. Though a picture of rural life in the nineteenth century, the transportation

⁵⁷ Felipe II, "Instructions for Tello, Toledo 25 May 1596", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. IX, 237.

⁵⁸ "Insurrection of Chinese, March 1640?" in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXIX, 239, 253.

⁵⁹ An Englishman, "Remarks on the Philippine Islands", vol. LI, 128.

⁶⁰ Montero y Vidal, J., *El Archipiélago Filipino y las Islas Marianas, Carolinas y Palaos: Su Historia, Geografía y Estadística* (Madrid: 1886) 285; Philippine Commission, *Report of the Philippine Commission*, vol. IV, 80.

situation in the province of Laguna gives some idea of the conditions experienced around the archipelago both at the time and before. The lake, from which the province derives its name, is surrounded by a series of high mountains that restrict extensive agriculture – and the site of the greatest number of towns – to narrow riparian areas. Most people were dependent on the extraction of oil from the cultivation of coconuts with which to pay for the necessities of life. An average family produced annually between 10–20 *arrobas* (from 115 to 230 kilos) of oil that required transportation to market to sell. Cartage, therefore, was a primary consideration, and anything that hindered its realisation or increased its costs impacted seriously upon people's livelihood and especially their ability to pay tax. Horses were the chief means of transportation and landowners regularly kept several animals for this purpose. Even poorer families owned horses, regularly assisting their neighbours by lending animals without charge when quantities of oil had to be transported to market. As the animal's diminutive size precluded it from bearing a load of more than 4–6 *arrobas* (46–69 kilos) on a single journey, three to four trips might be required to transport 20 *arrobas* the four leagues or so to market if animals were not shared in this manner. Apart from cartage or riding, horses were seldom used and were let loose on the mountainsides for much of the rest of the time.⁶¹

Far from a symbol of *hidalguía* linked to status, pomp and ceremony, the indigenous population reportedly treated their horses with a degree of indifference that, at times, outraged Spaniards. 'They do not care', complained Gaspar de San Agustín in 1720, 'for any domestic animal – dog, cat, horse or cow'.⁶² Nonetheless, such attitudes often originated in notions of assumed racial superiority than anything factual, and Europeans had made similar allegations about Asians since the days of Marco Polo.⁶³ Certainly, Filipinos ate horseflesh, often drying it before sale.⁶⁴ But the principal interest in horses, apart from conveyance or haulage, was on the racetrack where indigenous people

⁶¹ Carruajes, Carros y Caballos, "Expediente Sobre Dejar Sin Efecto la Circular de Este Centro, de 27 de Julio de 1886", Philippine National Archive, Carruajes, Carros y Caballos, Bundle 7, 1887.

⁶² de San Agustín Gaspar, "Letter on the Filipinos, 1720", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XL, 203.

⁶³ Doniger, "I Have Scinde" 948.

⁶⁴ Viana, Francisco Leandro, "Memorial of 1765, 10 February 1765", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. L, 305.

were observed to 'risk considerable sums on races of which they are very fond'.⁶⁵ Outside the lowlands, in the mountains that form the spine of every major island in the archipelago, were the so-called 'stunted' animals described by Mackie, 'wild horses' that were permitted, when not being used for travel or hunting, to 'run free in their fields without being able to determine their number'.⁶⁶ There was little in this horse tale to impress the colonial overlord and much, in fact, to alarm him.

Social Standing and Caballitos

Renaissance Europe was a time of change. It was also a period of social mobility as recently empowered groups sought recognition for their newfound economic and political influence in ostentatious displays of wealth. All across Europe, rulers and cities enacted sumptuary laws in attempts to rein in expenditure on luxury items and maintain the existing social order. Alan Hunt argues that these laws should be understood as a first response to modernity and particularly to the rise of urban centres, the emergence of class as the pervasive form of social relations and to the construction of gender relations under these new conditions.⁶⁷ The legislation did not only apply to what people wore or consumed but also to their means of transportation: their horses and coaches. An English statute of 1533 extended the prohibitions on types of cloth and colour to the apparel of their 'horse, mule, or other beasts, or harness of the same beast'.⁶⁸ Horse-ownership in Spain conferred gentlemanly status and its loss reduced a man back to the ranks.⁶⁹ In the Americas, the authorities, backed by royal ordinances, initially attempted to bar indigenous peoples from riding in order to

⁶⁵ An Englishman, "Remarks on the Philippine Islands", vol. LI, 128; Bankoff G., "Horsing Around: The Life and Times of the Horse in the Philippines at the Turn of the 20th Century", in Boomgaard. – Henley (eds.), *Smallholders and Stockbreeders*, 239–240.

⁶⁶ Carruajes, Carros y Caballos, "Blas Jerez to Director-General de Administración Civil", Philippine National Archive, Carruajes, Carros y Caballos, Bundle 7, 1889; Carruajes Carros y Caballos, "Maximo Loilla to Director-General de Administración Civil", Philippine National Archive, Carruajes, Carros y Caballos, Bundle 7, 1889.

⁶⁷ Hunt A., "The Governance of Consumption: Sumptuary Laws and Shifting Forms of Regulation", *Economy and Society* 25, 3 (1996) 413.

⁶⁸ Hunt, "The Governance of Consumption" 411.

⁶⁹ Lourie, "A Society Organized for War" 58.

denote their subservient status. Unfortunately, the need to employ locals as *vaqueros* (cowboys) and the spread of wild horses or mustangs rendered such endeavours largely futile.⁷⁰ By 1518 horses were being given to locals in Hispaniola. Indeed, the horse and cow came to define Spanish civilization over much of Latin America.⁷¹ Similar restrictions were placed on *castas* (mixed race) riding, including *Chinos*, as the inhabitants of the Philippines were often referred to in New Spain, but again to little or no avail.⁷²

In the archipelago itself, the colonial state seems not to have enforced such prohibitions. The only group directly banned from riding (as well as from bearing arms or wearing silk), as elsewhere in the Americas and Spain, were Jews. Even here, a certain leniency in interpretation was encouraged.⁷³ Nor could financially indisposed gentlemen have their horses seized for debt.⁷⁴ In large measure, the laxity of enforcement was simply a matter of practicalities, given the small number of Spaniards and the precariousness of their military situation at the end of a long supply line that stretched across the Pacific. In 1636, Governor Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera sought royal approval to raise two companies of fifty horsemen to protect the colony and maintain order in Manila, the first 'made up of the nobility of the city, who can keep horses', but the second comprising "overseers" of the royal stockyards, a somewhat vague identification that may have included persons of other races. Both, however, were to be similarly armed with spears.⁷⁵ A sense of the unease that was felt because of the lack of clear definition between public displays of wealth and a person's status is suggested by the description of an official procession in the late seventeenth century. City magistrates and eminent citizens dressed in their finery and mounted on equally finely caparisoned mounts were accompanied by 'many lackeys wearing rich livery (which is less costly in Manila than

⁷⁰ Denhardt, "The Horse in New Spain" 148.

⁷¹ Johnson J., "The Introduction of the Horse into the Western Hemisphere", *Hispanic American Historical Review* 23, 4 (1943) 608; Nichols, "The Spanish Horse of the Pampas" 119.

⁷² Slack E., "The *Chinos* in New Spain: A Corrective Lens for a Distorted Image", *Journal of World History* 20, 1 (2009) 48.

⁷³ Rios Pedro de los, "Instructions to Commissary of the Inquisition", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. V, 263.

⁷⁴ Felipe II. "Instructions from Felipe II", vol. VII, 162.

⁷⁵ Corcuera Sebastián Hurtado, "Corcuera to Felipe IV, Cavite 11 July 1636", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXVI, 196.

in other places)'.⁷⁶ Such views persisted. Even in the mid nineteenth century, the Spanish adventurer, poet and diplomat, Sinibaldo de Mas, advocated the imposition of an annual tax on the indigenous population, who desired to use a carriage or saddle horse 'so that those who sustain this luxury may be very few'.⁷⁷

Of course, this aspect of sumptuary restrictions made increasingly less sense over time as the horse's physiognomy attenuated. As the animal adjusted to its new environment and became smaller, it lost much of its symbolic value as a representation of *hidalguía*, of the social position and chivalric prowess of the coloniser. Instead, it became more closely associated with the humdrum affairs of the colonised. James Scott coined the phrase 'weapons of the weak' to describe the everyday forms of resistance such as foot-dragging, feigned ignorance, pilfering and the like that constitute the weapons of relatively powerless groups in society.⁷⁸ While not wishing to imbue the horse with any conscious agency in the matter, its gradual diminution acted as a form of 'natural resistance' to the invaders, belittling the assumed superiority of the colonisers and undermining the very foundations of the state. Its perfect accommodation to indigenous activities and usages only reinforced a sense of 'betrayal'. Perhaps, still more disquieting, the destiny of the horse in the Philippines only seemed symbolically to mirror the waning fortunes of Spain's own imperial destiny.

Nor are such claims exaggerated. Matters had reached such a pass by the nineteenth century that senior cavalry officers judged that the local horse had 'degenerated to such an extreme in this Archipelago that it effectively now serves for nothing'. In particular, there were no mounts capable of bearing heavy burdens and even very few saddle horses. And, as for riding, even 'if one is a horseman of regular height, it is impossible to mount one without looking ridiculous'.⁷⁹ Far from enhancing the dignity of the coloniser, the animal now served only to mock him: the *caballo* in *caballero* had become a *caballito*, a little horse, a pony. Moreover, there were even graver matters at stake. Local horses struggled to shift artillery batteries and were unable to bear the

⁷⁶ Diaz Casimiro, "Augustinians in Philippines, Manila 1718", in Blair – Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXXVII, 282.

⁷⁷ Mas S. de, *Informe Sobre el Estado de las Islas Filipinas En 1842* (Madrid: 1843) 52, 62.

⁷⁸ Scott J., *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 1985) 29.

⁷⁹ Raza de Caballeria de Filipinas, "Memoria Preliminar".

weight of a fully equipped rider. It was estimated that barely ten percent of the cavalry might pass muster on inspection at any one time.⁸⁰ More than a matter of ridicule, this was an affair of state and colonial authorities took urgent measures on at least two occasions. In 1856 and again in 1888, they tried in vain to improve the breed by the importation of Arab-bred stallions and the establishment of stud farms.⁸¹

Ann Game talks about 'becoming horse', the interconnectedness between rider and mount, embodying the centaur.⁸² In truth, the *caballo* was the essence of the *caballero*, the sixteenth century Spaniard, who arrived in the Philippines along with his mount. Rank, virility, prowess and superiority were all inseparably reflected by the rider and his steed. But as the latter adjusted to his new environment through attenuation, a gulf opened up between the two. The archipelago was never deemed salubrious for the European, who always remained, as one Spanish nineteenth century commentator considered, truly an exotic plant in that burning soil'.⁸³ This little horse, this *caballito*, no longer served to express status; worse, its ready adoption by the indigenous population and their despised agricultural pursuits demeaned it in the eyes of the coloniser. The horse had "gone native", its diminished size increasingly blamed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the organic inferiority of the tropics that lessened all animal life.⁸⁴ And such forces were held not only to apply to the beasts of the field or the birds of the air or the fish of the seas. Equal or larger differences existed between races so that '[indigenous] people resemble so little the European with respect to their constitution, as much in their physical as in their intellectual capacity'.⁸⁵ Over time, social standing in the Philippines came to be considered less a matter of ridership and more a product of natural selection and environmental adaptation.

⁸⁰ Raza de Caballeria de Filipinas, "Memoria Preliminar".

⁸¹ Bankoff, "A Question of Breeding" 419–423.

⁸² Game A., "Riding: Embodying the Centaur", *Body and Society* 7 (2001) 1–12.

⁸³ González y Martín R., *Filipinas y Sus Habitantes: Lo que Son y lo que Deben Ser* (Bejar: 1896) 25.

⁸⁴ Livingstone D., "Human Acclimatization: Perspectives on a Contested Field of Inquiry in Science, Medicine and Geography", *History of Science* 25 (1987) 359–394; Curtin P., *Death by Migration: Europe's Encounters with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: 1989); Anderson W., "Immunities of Empire: Race, Disease, and the New Tropical Medicine, 1900–1920", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 70 (1996) 94–118.

⁸⁵ González y Martín, *Filipinas*, 22–23.

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LETTING LOOSE THE HORSES:
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S EXORDIUM TO
*THE DEFENCE OF POESIE*¹

Elizabeth Anne Socolow

In 1572, when he was eighteen years old, Sir Philip Sidney embarked on a three year tour of Europe ostensibly 'for the attaining to the knowledge of foreign languages' but in reality designed to further his political education. The initiative may have come from his uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the queen's Master of the Horse and one her leading councillors, who was grooming him as his political as well as dynastic heir.² On 25 May 1572 Sidney was given licence to travel abroad, accompanied by a companion, Lodowick Bryskett, three servants and four horses. Two days later he left England as a member of the Earl of Lincoln's embassy to France, sent to ratify the Treaty of Blois but also instructed to discuss a possible marriage between the queen and the Duke of Alençon. After Lincoln's departure back to England, Sidney moved from the Louvre Palace, almost surely to the Paris home of the ambassador, Sir Francis Walsingham.³ Thus, while at Paris, he became an eye-witness to the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants in the streets of the capital (23–26 August 1572), an event that dashed any hope of a royal, Anglo-French marriage that year. So began Sidney's public life and with it his public alliance with horses.⁴

Between this moment and his untimely death fourteen years later, caused by a musket wound inflicted during a battle on horseback, Sidney wrote his *Defence of Poesie*. This essay examines the Exordium

¹ The contemporary authoritative biography of Sidney was written not long after his too-early death by his friend Fulke Greville, *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney* (London: 1906), first published 1652. For all the most familiar and 'common knowledge' stories of his life, which rely on the original Greville biography, the reader can consult the introduction to the 1595 Ponsoby edition of *The Defence of Poesie*, eds. R.S. Bear – M. Bear, Renaissance Editions (Eugene, Ore.: 1992), available at <http://www.luminarium.org/renaissance-editions/defence.html> (accessed July 26, 2010), which for the convenience of online reference I have also used for all quotations.

² See Stewart A., *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: 2000) 68–70.

³ *Ibid.*, 72–73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 84–90.

of Sidney's *Defence*, exploring the ways that elitist concerns with courtly values, the rhetorical strategies involved in diplomacy and in service to and dependence on the monarch and a valorisation of horses and equestrian arts come together in the text, as they did in these significant moments in Sidney's life. In considering why a treatise that is overtly concerned with poetry should open with references to horses, I not only explore its direct allusions to an equine-centred world but also its implicit assumptions (if we re-situate it within the context of understanding, reading and knowledge of the late sixteenth-century courtly culture). Just as Sidney's *The Defence of Poesie* – perhaps surprisingly – contains not horse play exactly but something like playfully deliberate and apparent 'horse thought', so surrounding texts, which share a commonality of knowledge and allusion, are both literary and horse-suffused. Looking at such writings, even when they are not directly named by Sidney, expands our understanding of his *Defence*; unpacking the meanings of the work adds to our appreciation of the complex ways in which horses in thought and experience are woven into the fabric of Sidney's culture.

The Writing of The Defence of Poesie

Sidney admired horses, he tells us in the jocular Exordium of *The Defence of Poesie*, because they were 'the one serviceable Courtier without flattery'.⁵ He knew horses well, having grown up with them at Penshurst in Kent, where his father, Sir Henry Sidney, maintained one of the finest studs in the county. Later, Sir Philip hired Signor Romano, an Italian horse master, to teach William Herbert, his sister Mary's son, to ride.⁶ His interest in horses, typical of the landed elite of the time, explains why he began a treatise about poetry, an uncompromisingly verbal medium in its argument and display (as flattery must also be),⁷ with an account of the clearly non-verbal (though surely cerebral) relationship between a horse and its human rider. How does

⁵ Bear, *Defence*, near n. 2. The online text can be accessed by inserting a keyword.

⁶ Thirsk J., "Horses in Early Modern England", in *The Rural Economy of England* (London: 1984) 377; 386; 388 fn. 77.

⁷ Gifts, by contrast, are bribery. Since flattery is made of words, it is available to all classes of person, poor as well as wealthy. This is important both to the argument and to the jocularity of the opening, as Sidney does not want to be seen as flattering the queen.

it serve his argument? His reasons for opening with horses, although veiled to a modern reader, would not have perplexed his contemporaries, especially the queen, who was still, perhaps chief, among his intended readers. By March 1580 he had retired from the court, having displeased the queen as a result of a trivial argument with the Earl of Oxford, a favourite of hers, and as the writer of a letter to her opposing the renewed marriage negotiations with Alençon, now the Duke of Anjou. With the pro-French party, which included Oxford, in the ascendancy, Sidney may have found it politic to keep his distance.⁸ In a kind of forced exile he took up the ‘unelected vocation’ of poet in what he calls ‘these my not old yeares and idlest times’.⁹

Twenty-four years old, unmarried, learned and, as his complaint shows, somewhat stung, he needed to engage in what we might term the ‘thick leisure’¹⁰ of the aristocracy of the time. He therefore looked to his younger sister, Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, for help, and on her Wilton estate the two of them set about translating all the Psalms together.¹¹ He then penned what is sometimes called the “*Old*” *Arcadia* and *The Defence of Poesie*. All three works, which clearly engaged and distracted him, were intended to further his cause of self-pleading with the queen.¹² In essence, they formed an extended dialogue in three modes with his monarch about what it meant to rule, how good character was shaped and maintained, what fed and instructed the presentation of self and the formation of a temperament able to avoid self-indulgence and tyranny over others. To engage

⁸ Stewart, *Sidney* 215–225.

⁹ Bear, *Defence*, first paragraph near n. 2; Stewart, *Sidney* 215–222.

¹⁰ After Clifford Geertz, the anthropologist, who coined the term ‘thick description’ as a method of filling out the interactive observation of a visitor to a culture under study so that the context as well as the particularity is given shape. Geertz C., *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: 1973) 5–6; 9–10. See also Graham, “Early Modern England” 118, on ‘the seriousness of leisure’ of the aristocracy in early modern England: Graham E., “Early Modern England: James Shirley’s *Hyde Park* (1632) and Gervase Markham’s *Cavalierice*”, in Fudge E. (ed.), *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals & Other Wonderful Creatures* (Urbana, Ill.: 2003) 118.

¹¹ For a convenient and complete chronology of Sidney’s works and life, see Hamlin H. et al., (eds.) *The Sidney Psalter: The Psalms of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney* (Oxford: 2009) xli–xliii.

¹² We cannot know that the queen read the *Defence*, but his estrangement did end, and the queen, as we know, did not marry Alençon or anyone else. Thus, whether or not she rather than one of her councillors read the *Defence*, its aim to advise her and to ease Sidney’s return to court was accomplished.

in such self-fashioning¹³ and by that occupation to govern well was deemed to be virtuous and manly,¹⁴ traits which horsemanship promoted, although Sidney made it clear that he considered poetry, the object of his scrutiny in the *Defence*, to be the ultimate educator.¹⁵

Horsemanship and Elite Society

My concentration on the beginning of the *Defence* (with occasional glances beyond the opening five pages), Sidney's most theoretical and argumentative piece of the three compositions of his retirement years, arises from his own considerable, perhaps unexpected, emphasis on horsemanship at the start of a treatise devoted to the uses of poetry in courtly practice. Sidney began *The Defence of Poesie* with extended reference to the thoughts of the Italian riding master, Giovanni Pietro Pugliano, whom he had met at Emperor Maximilian's court in Vienna, while visiting the great humanist, protestant scholar and diplomat, Hubert Languet, his mentor and friend.¹⁶ As Sidney records, 'When the right virtuous E[dward] Wotton, & I, were at the Emperors Court together, we gaue our selues to learne horsemanship of Iohn Pietro Pugliano: one that with great commendation had the place of an Esquire in his stable [...].'¹⁷

¹³ Greenblatt S., *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: 1980), was the seminal work that introduced the New Historicism. He argued that social norms governed the idea of self, the mould into which a gentleman attempted to shape himself. Dress, skill and learning all followed patterns. Among the accomplishments of character were a complex set of contradictory guidelines that asked for an impression always to be created, but at the same time insisted on probity and self-knowledge. See especially the introduction.

¹⁴ Virtue derived from the Latin *virtus*, 'the quality of being like a man', and had been used by Machiavelli to mean cagy as well as honorable. 'Vertue', on the other hand, had connotations that went along with Christian religious ideas of purity and chastity. See the discussion of Niccolò Machiavelli by Nederman C., "Power, Virtue, and Fortune", section 3, in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2005, rev. 2009), available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/machiavelli> (accessed July 20, 2010).

¹⁵ Bear, *Defence*, opening paragraph. Doing without poetry is impossible: in the closing words of the *Defence* Sidney wishes that no one be without love for want of the ability to pen a sonnet nor without remembrance for want of an epitaph. However, the humanist tradition which fashioned Sir Philip Sidney held action, activity, sway, movement, and influence above meditative and contemplative study.

¹⁶ Stillman R.E., *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (Aldershot: 2008) front matter, 89, 107, 206–207; Stewart, *Sidney*, 136ff.

¹⁷ Bear, *Defence*, opening paragraph.

At the time, Italian riding masters were considered the best in Europe so it is not surprising to learn that Sidney was pleased to account himself one of his pupils. The ensuing summary of, and commentary on, Pugliano's thinking formed the starting point for Sidney's own presentation of the uses of poetry, especially as a means of resisting the temptation to act as a tyrant, an aim which, arguably, would have been the ground-base of any enlightened political education among humanists of his age. And in the remainder of the classically-structured argument¹⁸ that informs the *The Defence of Poesie*, it was only poetry, by which he meant all works of literary imagination (both the reading and making of written art) that provided, for Sidney a better architecture than horsemanship for becoming a man of virtue. Although, ultimately, poetry most clearly embodied the crucial attributes of virtue and courtliness, horsemanship and poetical expertise were explicitly and implicitly linked through the opening passages of the *Defence* as cognate practices. They are the stuff of heroes. Yet, the exact reasons why horsemanship should figure so prominently as an analogue of literature in the making of a heroic nature are not obvious to a modern sensibility. It is the significance of the apparently curious attention that Sidney gave to horsemanship as a prelude to his thoughts on poetry and virtue that I turn to now.

The *Defence*, although a theoretical treatise, also had the practical purpose of asking for pardon, which was, in fact, granted. By 1583, after the circulation of his sonnet sequence, *Astrophel and Stella*, the queen had knighted him.¹⁹ The implicit dialogue with monarchy was revealed in the follow-up events to his words, although we have no record of a direct, royal, written response to his literary endeavours at Wilton. The specific audience and purpose of the *Defence* is worth emphasizing, because one of the shared characteristics of poetry and horsemanship immediately apparent to Sidney's contemporaries, if not to us, is that writing and riding were both performances, one person quite deliberately putting on a show for an audience, who will, implicitly, judge it. In the culture of the Renaissance in England, adherence

¹⁸ For a discussion of the classical rhetorical structure of Sidney's essay, see the poetics essay posted by the Poetry Foundation of America (an offshoot of *Poetry Magazine*), available at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/poetics-essay.html?id=237818&page=10>. The sources cited in this essay are Arber E., *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London: 1858); Collins J.C., *Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie* (Oxford: 1907); and Cook A.S. (ed.), *The Defence of Poesy* (Boston: 1890).

¹⁹ See Hamlin, *The Sidney Psalter* xli–xliii.

to a model and a standard was essential in almost every facet of life.²⁰ Moreover, because the performance had to appear both graceful and natural, endowed and delivered with what Castiglione had called *sprezzatura*, practitioners could only achieve the requisite level of skill as a result of long training and dedication. The concept of “springingness” and effortless grace and animation itself was a quality of the best trained hunters and warhorses.²¹

The performance was judged in part according to knowledge of the expected form and the ease with which it was followed. Form, we tend to forget, was the centre of *performance*, the standard and model against which the rider’s ability could be assessed. Horsemanship was particularly driven by a sense of form, in imitation of the ancients. Fortuitously, the complete work *On Horsemanship* by the Classical Greek writer, Xenophon, had been discovered in Italy in the mid sixteenth century and translated, with the result that schools that emphasized the teaching of form had grown up there. Gentling a horse and persuading it to work co-operatively were hallmarks of the compassionate psychology that Xenophon had advocated, but show and elegance had likewise formed components of his teaching.²²

The relationship of two conflicting wills of two different sentient beings is what Xenophon explored in a fashion that was new to the thinking of those who rediscovered him so many centuries later. There, in the discovery of his text, we make contact with another form of relationship that influenced Sidney to open a discourse on poetry with a mini-essay on managing horses. In a horse-centred world a continuum in thought and practice existed between managing horses and managing people. In addition to the books about horsemanship

²⁰ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 1–10; 222–230 and *passim*.

²¹ LeGuin E., “Man and Horse in Harmony”, in Raber – Tucker, *The Culture of the Horse* (New York: 2005) 175–195, especially 184, 193–194, explores the metaphor completely, using the rhythms of music and of riding, as well as the perception of both rider and audience of animal grace and ‘corporeal intelligence’. See also Edwards P., *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: 2004), and *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London: 2007) 30, 34, 68 and *passim* for standards, models and modes of training, breeding and riding, as well as trading and making horses the right size and shape to conform to various needs: workaday and sporting.

²² Something tantamount to a revolution in thinking about horsemanship occurred when Xenophon was rediscovered. For a sense of his importance in early modern Europe, see LeGuin, “Man and Horse” 176–177, 182–184, 194; Edwards, *Horse and Man* 39, 131. For Xenophon’s importance in influencing a succession of other writings in translation about horse handling see Thirsk, “Horses” 390.

that began to circulate after Gisone's version of Xenophon, there were throughout Europe many examples in print of poets and other writers giving direct advice to the nation's governors. In England, the best-known is Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke Named the Gouvernour*, published in 1531. Moreover, the nature of the exchange, the one-on-one intimacy of address, the singular relationship of petition (again, one-on-one) is replicated in the relationship between a horse and a rider, the lengthy subject of Sidney's scrutiny in the Exordium to his *Defence*. In both sorts of text, whether learning to control horses or to govern a state, the power between the two in the relationship is profoundly unequal; one has complete hold over the survival of the other and yet the weaker party is the one 'leading'. How, despite power, could one persuade sentient beings, equine or human, to do one's will had become the heart of the question in both kinds of writing.²³ In short, by the time Sidney was writing his *Defence*, alongside treatises on how to manage a horse, a one-sided book-length dialogue intended for a governor (often the monarch) had become what we would call a genre. It was clearly a risky enterprise, however, especially as the author was almost always engaged in the process of some sort of special pleading, while offering models and instruction for his or her superior to lead a disciplined life.²⁴

Likewise, riding was dangerous and required discipline. It was also a performance, a demonstration of one's ability to manage a creature, half-wild, though domesticated and trained, and very much more powerful than the person mounted on its back. In this respect, Xenophon's *On Horsemanship* offered advice and instruction about a similar sort

²³ Elyot Thomas, *The Boke Named the Gouvernour* (London, T. Berthelet: 1531). A compendium or anthology, *A Mirror for Magistrates*, was first published in 1559, but was compiled earlier and had numerous contributors. The genre of writing a dialogue began, arguably, with Thomas Hoccleve's (1412) Lancastrian *Regement of Princes*, and had become commonplace by the time Sidney was writing, as indicated by such books as Elyot's *The Gouvernour* and Roger Ascham's *Toxophilus* (1545) and his posthumous *The Scholemaster* (1570). For discussions of Xenophon's theory of managing horses, and the work by Corte, Blundeville, Grisone, Gervase Markham, see Edwards, *Horse and Man*; Graham, "Early Modern England"; LeGuin, "Man and Horse"; Raber - Tucker, *Culture of the Horse*; Thirsk, "Horses" 389-393.

²⁴ Sir Thomas Elyot, for instance, advocated the abolition of punishment in general and the use of the rod in particular as the chief means of getting a child to learn. He went to great pains to argue for gentleness and the use of music to ease the way. Pleasure rather than harshness was the better teacher. The Puritans were not yet powerful enough to suppress all such thinking, but given the methods of his time, it was somewhat dangerous for Elyot to make this case: Elyot, *The Gouvernour*, 25-27.

of unequal relationship.²⁵ Indeed, *The Gouverneur* and *On Horsemanship* would have seemed like similar kinds of work to an early modern literate reader. Both books were humanitarian in approach and both concerned will and the uses of power and influence. To drive home the analogy is to notice that if it is difficult for us to imagine horses and their meaning in a world without mechanical transportation of any kind,²⁶ it is also hard to contemplate what it would be like to make a substantive and controversial suit to an all-powerful monarch. Implicitly, as horses did not flatter, Sidney did not and would not flatter the queen. Yet, he could hope to manage her, bend her will and tame her. In this figure of his work, he was both horse and rider, with Elizabeth as the power that ultimately held sway over his life. Power relations were, then, immediately invoked in the image of the horse and the rider, while the special power-relation of an estranged courtier to his powerful queen was contained, silently, in the image,²⁷ together with the reference to flattery and its repudiation.

Xenophon was influential in re-establishing in early modern Europe the desire to ride well, and to rule well, for his ghostly presence in the Exordium is, as we shall see later, stunningly made manifest a few paragraphs into the main body of Sidney's argument itself. However, the desire to write brilliantly, to soar to new heights and to leave a mark for posterity, as allied to riding a horse magnificently, had a different classical locus, namely Virgil's *Georgics*, second only to his *Aeneid* in grandeur and fame.²⁸ It arguably contains the most magnificent descriptions of horses perhaps in *all* western poetry, as is shown in the following four lines in the Introduction to Book III, sometimes entitled in modern English, "Breeding Stock."²⁹ Ostensibly about the

²⁵ The capacity of people, owners, and others to abuse animals is clearly described by Edwards in *Horse and Man* 57–63.

²⁶ Joan Thirsk has written, 'Horses were as indispensable to men as is the car, the lorry, and the tractor today [...], Thirsk, "Horses" 375.

²⁷ To Freudians it is a commonplace that power is involved in sexuality. To people in horse cultures as well, the obvious sexual and gender implications were clear. See Edwards, *Horse and Man* 86; also see the O.E.D. for "sport" and "riding", and Graham, "Early Modern England" 118, on the double entendre in the use of the word "sport".

²⁸ John Dryden, England's Poet Laureate in the seventeenth century, famously said of *The Georgics*, which he translated, that it was "the best poem by the best poet." Cited by Ferry D., in the introduction to his translation of Virgil's *Georgics* (New York: 2005) vi.

²⁹ Virgil himself did not give the various sections titles and so, depending upon the translation used in modern English, one will find different titles or, as in Ferry's

birth-to-death care of farm animals (beginning with cattle) and therefore a practical subject, it might seem odd to us to see it yoked with heroic language like this:

Who has not told of the boy, Hylas, and Latona's Delos,
and Hippodame, and Pelops, known for his ivory shoulder,
fearless with horses? I must try a path, by which I too
can rise from the earth and fly, victorious, from men's lips.³⁰

The 'telling' and the allusion to older authors and ancient material was Sidney's method throughout the *Defence*, just as it was Virgil's. The language of a classical poet like Virgil could invoke the intention to fly like the wondrous, mythological horse, Pegasus, and so also fly from other men's lips in admiration. Sidney's companion desire to leave a mark and his name on men's lips, his ambition to 'soar' as horsemen did, meant he would have to accomplish primacy without being poet laureate- age and Spenser's tenure of the office precluding it. He would also have to gain recognition *without boasting*, which, according to the Tudors, was a singularly unappealing Latin and Italian habit.³¹ By inserting Pugliano's inflated claims about his profession of horse master, Sidney was making a somewhat back-handed, if persuasive, appeal to rhetorical attitudes and practice: both those to be used and those to be avoided. To double the paradox, Sidney announced he would imitate Pugliano's boastful praise of his profession by praising poetry in a similar elaborate manner.

Sidney, thus, both imitates Virgil and breaks correct form, while gently mocking his model, Pugliano, by using hyperbole as a device in the Italian riding master's reported speech. His allusion to Virgil's famous celebration of the horse was substantiated, as well as half obscured, by his device of introducing a living Italian authority on horses, who

exquisitely poetic version, none at all. The translation I have used for quotation here because it is unadorned and accessible online calls the book *Breeding Stock*.

³⁰ Virgil, *The Georgics*, transl. A.S. Kline (2002) book III, lines 7ff., available at <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/VirgilGeorgicsIII.htm> (accessed August 15, 2010). As Sidney had to make his own translation, and would have done so almost bilingually, I am using one easily accessible both in its transparency and online.

³¹ Shakespeare's Italians, in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *The Merchant of Venice* are transparent in their *braggadocio*, usually as comedy, though there is poignancy and danger in the trait in the casket scenes on Belmont in *Merchant of Venice*. For a more complete view of foreigners as perceived by Tudor English culture, see Socolow E.A., *The Role of the Foreigner in Elizabethan Drama from Tamburlaine to Coriolanus*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1967; Virgil, *The Georgics* III, 104–113.

was also wildly boastful. There are dozens of lines on horses in the body of Book III of *The Georgics*, as well as in the Introduction, and of them I have selected a few of the most accessible rather than the most extravagant ones. They extend the description of the horse to its role in gaming and in war as the engine of the ancient chariot. What the lines convey is the assumption of deep investment in and observation and knowledge of the behaviour of horses at the time. That same assumption could be made about Sidney's contemporaries. He could also expect his educated readers to know their Virgil and associate it with Pugliano's invocation of war. Early modern sensibility did not separate the practical from the heroic precisely because they appreciated the superlative physical grace and intelligence of horses in motion and because they had read the work of ancient writers like Xenophon and Virgil on the subject:

Have you seen the chariots pour from the barrier,
rushing to attack the flat, competing headlong,
when young men's hopes are roused, and fear throbs,
draining each exultant heart? On they go with writhing whips,
bending forward to loosen the rein, the red-hot axle turns:
Now low, now lifted high, they seem to be carried
through the void, and leap into the air:
no delay, no rest: a cloud of yellow dust rises,
and they're wet with foam, and the breath of those pursuing:
so strong the desire for glory, so dear is victory.³²

Here the excitement of the contest and the thrill of yearning and striving apply as much to the horses as to the charioteers, and the 'confusion' between horse and man is deliberate: each partakes of the other's nobility. Virgil's 'young men's hopes [...] roused, and fear throbs,/ draining each exultant heart' seems far more emotional and exaggerated to our sensibilities than Sidney's report of Pugliano's boast, which we are meant to chuckle at for its effusive overstatement:

He said souldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of souldiers. He said they were the maisters of warre, and ornaments of peace, speedie goers, and strong abiders, triumphers both in Camps and Courts: nay to so unbleeved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a Prince, as to be a good horseman.³³

³² Virgil, *The Georgics* III, 104–113.

³³ Bear, *Defence*, opening paragraph.

Though tamer than Virgil's description, Sidney's portrait of Pugliano typically held the foreigner up to scorn. Whereas Gervase Markham excoriated the 'enemy' Spaniards for their immoral and incestuous breeding practices, allowing young colts to 'cover' their own dams,³⁴ Sidney's mockery of Pugliano's boasting was gentler and more humorous, punning on the assonance between over-ornamentation, gilding and gelding an animal: 'with his no few words he drave into me, that selflove is better than any gilding, to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves be parties'.³⁵

As even the briefest glance at Elyot's *The Governour* or Ascham's *The Scholemaster* makes clear, self-love was the exact opposite to the guiding principle of Tudor upper class education, which sought wisdom by studying others, often impossible to converse with because long dead.³⁶ Pugliano's statements were 'unbleeved' and so excessive that, had Sidney not been a "Logitian" before he met the Italian horse master, he would have wanted to *be* a horse himself.³⁷ He acted as if Pugliano repudiated Machiavelli and all his countrymen's work on statecraft when he had Pugliano affirm that nothing caused as much 'wonder' in a Prince 'as to be a good horseman'. Skill of government was 'but a Pedenteria in comparison'.³⁸

Poetry of Motion and Emotion

Educational theory in Tudor times, as exemplified by Ascham, who had learnt it (as had Languet) from Johannes Sturm, the German humanist,³⁹ emphasized the loss of personal agency in studying

³⁴ Graham, "Early Modern England" 131–132.

³⁵ Bear, *Defence*, opening paragraph.

³⁶ See, for example, "Preface to the Reader", in Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (London, John Daye: 1570), and the section entitled "The first booke for the youth", 183–184, available in a translation by J. Boss at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1844/1844-8.txt> (accessed August 6, 2010).

³⁷ Bear, *Defence*, opening paragraph.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Sturm was a humanist Protestant scholar, theologian, and Luther's 'right hand man'. For a discussion of the relations between Sturm and Ascham, Melanchthon, the Phillipists and Languet, see Stillman R.E., "The Truths of a Slippery World: Poetry and Tyranny in Sidney's Defence", *The Free Library* (2002), available at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The%20truths%20of%20a%20slippery%20world:%20poetry%20and%20tyranny%20in%20Sidney%27s%20Defence-a097937449> (accessed December 28, 2010).

others: observing their lives, reading about them, in effect, 'becoming' them through their words. Sturm's programme for educating someone, who had to exercise authority, was to translate one author's work with a tutor, whereby the one-on-one teaching relationship replicated the dyadic bond of pupil and author. Students in Ascham's programme began with Cicero's *Epistles* and moved on to his orations.⁴⁰ Sidney argued that poetry introduced us to the experience of others unbounded by the dictates of fact and history or the dryness of philosophy, but accompanied by the delights of measure.⁴¹ Although he did not state it, except in an ironic reference to the expressiveness of horses and their inability to flatter, the dyadic relationship between a rider and a strong and keen mount was even closer and more mysterious, perhaps because, like the mythological Centaurs in themselves, a rider and a horse signified inter-species communication.⁴²

Elisabeth LeGuin emphasizes the role of music, measure and harmony in the Tudor experience of horsemanship, and *implicitly* Sidney in his *Defence* relied on his readers to deduce that grace of rhythm, balance and equestrian carriage provided a grounding for tranquility and balance, as well as liveliness, in their lives. His discussion of the metres of the Psalms in the *Defence*, when taken together with his actual translation of some of the most famed psalms, make a somewhat indirect case for his belief that the rhythms of horses in motion soothe, calm and guide us.

If, in the authorized version of the Bible, 'The mountains skipped like rams, [and] the little hills like lambs', Sidney's image of the inspiration derived from the 'hills, from whence cometh my help', owed more to horses. He speaks of the hills leaping like 'beasts' and says that David, the Psalmist, 'maketh you as it were see God comming in his maijestie, his telling of the beasts joyfulnessse, and hils leaping'.⁴³ Even so, when in the *Defence*, he explicitly extols the effects of instrumental music and measure on our ears and sings the praises of the music of

⁴⁰ Ascham, *The Scholemaster* 183–184.

⁴¹ Sidney uses the word frequently and speaks of verse that is measured as an aid to memory. Bear, *Defence*, near n. 98. See LeGuin, "Man and Horse" 186ff. for the musical aspects of riding.

⁴² LeGuin, "Man and Horse" 186; on the corporeal intelligence of horses and the lack of full understanding of "the mind body split", 194. According to Dr. Sacks, neurologically, how a horse communicates its nervous system to the rider is not well understood by the medical profession.

⁴³ *Psalms* 114:4.

poetry,⁴⁴ he only implicitly refers to that musical and calming quality in a horse's movement. In a horse-centred world he could assume the association. Sidney only refers to the invigorating and stabilizing effect of a canter or gallop or lively verse in the negative, complaining about the 'plodding' metres of poor poets who exhaust their readers like 'Post horses'.⁴⁵

However, in the major attitudes of allusion and acceptance of an anti-puritanical investment in learning by way of the senses and, in particular, by riding horses and by listening to music, Sidney absorbed Elyot's arguments about measure as conducive to calm, balance and pleasure. He translated, transformed and transposed them in his discussion of horses and poetry, asserting that all learning is enhanced more by pleasure than elicited by the rod and that poetry was the best teacher because it delighted as it instructed.⁴⁶

For if Oratio, next to Ratio, Speech next to Reason, be the greatest gift bestowed upon Mortalitie, that cannot bee praiseless, which doth most polish that blessing of speech; which considereth each word not onely as a man may say by his forcible qualitie, but by his best measured quantity: carrying even in themselves a Harmonie, without perchance number, measure, order, proportion, be in our time growne odious. But laie aside the just praise it hath, by being the onely fit speech for Musicke, (Musicke I say the most divine striker of the senses).⁴⁷

In Sidney's emphasis on measure, the rhythms of riding and the metres of poetry came together. They combined further with what is still in use as an idiom: "measured judgement" is an outgrowth of developing a sense of proportion in all things. The assonant effect on the nerves, as well as the mind, of song – as in the psalms, in verse or of a horse's conveyance of rhythmic movement to a rider – affected character and the ability to make good judgment. Sidney went so far as to say the image of hills leaping like beasts in the Psalms of David put us in touch with divinity itself.⁴⁸

Far from dragging us down in sensuous doom, as the Puritans objected, poetry and horsemanship lift us up, as we are uplifted by

⁴⁴ Bear, *Defence*. There are so many references, one of which I quote in the text, that the reader is encouraged to enter the word spelled 'musicke' in the search slot of the online text.

⁴⁵ Ibid., near n. 145.

⁴⁶ Ibid., near n. 50.

⁴⁷ Ibid., near n. 97.

⁴⁸ Ibid., near n. 14.

the hills leaping like 'beasts'. The pleasure-base of horse riding and its measures evoked the beauty of motion in the observation and performance of equestrian 'airs' and feats, thereby linking the activity to the rhythmic delights of poetry. As such, they became kindred enemies of Puritans. Stephen Gosson's attack in 1579 is often seen as the goad to the *Defence*⁴⁹ but Sidney neither mentioned the puritanical critique nor its author. He did not stoop to name his enemy. By refusing to identify the person, he took the rhetorical device of preterition one step further and, in doing so, acted as if his defence of poesie arose from an interior need rather than as a response to a petty detractor.

However, as significant as the works he omitted are the ones he praised, including Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar*. Akin to the negative centrality of Sidney at the opening of Gosson's tract, Spenser's *Calendar* was dedicated to Sidney in the year 1579 in a prefatory epistle by E.K. It, too, leads us to the *Georgics*.⁵⁰ Spenser, like Sidney's father, Henry, served Queen Elizabeth in Ireland (though less grandly). Spenser, the poet laureate under Elizabeth, made the most of his assignment and ennobled and developed the literary pastoral tradition. For his part, Sidney silently occupied himself with his literary projects, perhaps because he was regretting his withdrawal from court-life and used his retirement to write, as Virgil had done before him. It is partly for this reason that I believe Virgil and horses came to his mind as an opening and as a (hidden) model. Had Sidney overtly compared himself to Virgil, it would have been akin to Pugliano's boasting, but with due humility he praised the poet as one who had possessed a 'divine' force.⁵¹

Horsemanship and Politics

Rather than focusing on the seat of power, the *Georgics* deal with country life, a pastoral that includes explicit information about agriculture, bee-keeping and animal husbandry. In its practicality, it resembles other classical texts not only known in full but relied upon as guides in Sidney's epoch, most notably Xenophon's *On Horsemanship*. Sidney

⁴⁹ Ibid., "Introduction".

⁵⁰ Thornton B.S., "Rural Dialectic: Pastoral, Georgic, and 'The Shepheardes Calendar'", in Cullen P. – Roche T.P. Jr. (eds.), *Spenser Studies* 9 (New York: 1991) 1–20.

⁵¹ Bear, *Defence*, near n. 13.

does not explicitly mention the *Georgics* or *On Horsemanship* in the *Defence*, though he does cite the *Aeneid*⁵² and by inference the *Anabasis*, Xenophon's comparable work about heroic leadership, which concerns Cyrus⁵³ of Persia, the brother of Artaxerxes. Sidney, relying on classical models, as was typical at the time, imitates both Xenophon and Virgil by writing a treatise, the Exordium, on horses as a preface to his longer work on governance and how poetry shapes good leaders. Though the yoking of a short treatise on horses and the lengthy examination of poetry has often baffled scholars interpreting the *Defence*, Sidney's choice exemplifies the relative absence of a mind-body split among his contemporaries in the way they viewed wisdom. We finally have a key to what the Exordium on horses is doing. *Mens sana in corpora sano* reflected both classical and early modern writers' attention to what LeGuin calls 'the corporeal intelligence'⁵⁴ of horses as well as the heroic intelligence of humans.

The jocular Exordium of the *Defence* thus points the way to Cyrus, the most respected anti-tyrant in the philosophical circle with which Sidney was associated, led in his day by Hubert Languet.⁵⁵ Languet thought of Sidney as 'the English Cyrus',⁵⁶ and though Sidney did not want to boast of the honour or the trust bestowed on him by his mentor, he wanted to go to war,⁵⁷ as both Xenophon and Cyrus did. It is as if he wished not only to emulate Virgil in his soaring words but also to replicate Cyrus's achievements by living up to Languet's grandiose expectations of him. He has the horsemanship but lacks the means to act at the time he is writing. He, like Virgil, or like the Psalmist in many of the psalms, is estranged from the court. The jocular exordium thus belies a heavy emotional, heroic burden of hope and disappointment.

Modern interpreters see Virgil's *The Georgics* as lying somewhat in the tradition of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* but do not tend to

⁵² Bear, *Defence*, near n. 22; n. 45.

⁵³ Ibid., near n. 20 through n. 52, concerns Cyrus. See Stillman, *Philip Sidney* xiv and final chapter.

⁵⁴ LeGuin, "Man and Horse" 184; 193–194.

⁵⁵ For more on Sidney's friendship with Languet, see Rosand D., "Dialogues and Apologies: Sidney and Venice", *Studies in Philology* 88, 2 (1991) 237, 238, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174394> (accessed April 19, 2010).

⁵⁶ See G. Alexander's review of Stillman's book, "Robert E. Stillman. Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism", *Review of English Studies* 61, 248 (2010) 133.

⁵⁷ All the biographers describe Sidney's eagerness to be aggressive toward the Spanish in the Netherlands, both before and after his assignment to join his uncle Leicester in 1586.

mention Xenophon's *On Horsemanship*, even when they make claims for Virgil's work being read as an early scientific exploration.⁵⁸ As suggested above, the most florid and breathtaking passages about horses come in the first part of Book III of the *Georgics*. Here, we are not in the realm of sexual dalliance but of reproduction, and that was the ultimate issue and ambiguity about Sidney's quarrel with the queen. If she married a French Catholic, would there be an heir to the throne or was it a *mere* political gesture with no solution to the question of inheritance? In 1581, as Sidney was writing, the queen was forty-eight years old and a first child at such an age was not only highly risky, but also extremely unlikely.

Tact dictated, however, that Sidney – immersed in a culture that would have associated the Exordium with the best known classical writings on horsemanship, and then connected Book III of Virgil's *Georgics* with the breeding of cattle and horses – did not mention reproduction. For this reason, it seems clear that Sidney did everything he could to invoke the beauty of those passages of poetry without naming the source. To have opened a defence of poetry in a stable with a mini-essay on horsemanship was to bring to mind the *Georgics* and thence issues of weakening stock and good breeding of beautiful horses, good poetry and good sires and dams, and gentle leadership and sway. Thus, the hyperbole of the first paragraph of Sidney's work served as a veiled reference to the words of Virgil, at once gorgeous (if mythically overblown) and experiential and down to earth. "*Breeding Livestock*" alludes to what the reader would have been thinking about: breeding and the throne and horsemanship. A few of Sidney's friends, perhaps even the queen, might have remembered how highly Languet had thought of Sidney and some of them might even have known that in Vienna his scholarly host had all but given him the sobriquet, 'the English Cyrus'. In the realm of Sidney, myth and actuality blend: Cyrus can be compared to Aeneas. Virgil of both the *Aeneid* and the *Georgics* and Xenophon of both the *Anabasis* and *On Horsemanship* are present

⁵⁸ De Bruyn F., "Reading Virgil's *Georgics* as a Scientific Text: The Eighteenth-Century Debate between Jethro Tull and Stephen Switzer", *ELH* 71, 3 (2004) 661–689; and Liebeschuetz W., "Beast and Man in the Third Book of Virgil's 'Georgics'", *Greece & Rome*, second series, 12, 1 (1965) 64–77, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/642409>.

without being immediately named.⁵⁹ The Exordium gives us the 'practical' works, while the body of the main argument mentions the heroes belonging to the epic accounts of war and national destiny.

At the conclusion of his Exordium on horses, in which he set up Pugliano's discourse, however boastful, as a model for his defence of *his* own vocation, Sidney offered the most folksy of his observations about horses, seamlessly following it by an assertion of the connection he found between involvement with horses and the self-knowledge and discipline necessary to a ruler. As, he postulated, the saddle maker's purpose was to make a good soldier quite beyond his skill with leather, so the end of all knowledge was 'the knowledge of a mans selfe, in the Ethike and Politique consideration, *with the end of well doing, and not of well knowing onely*'.⁶⁰ Although 'the Sadlers next ende is to make a good Saddle',⁶¹ it is 'his further ende, to serve a nobler facultie, which is horsemanship'.⁶² Thence, the horseman's cause was to be a soldier, and the soldier aimed not only to 'have the skill, but to performe the practise of a souldier. So that the end of all earthly learning, being verteous action, those skills that most serve to bring forth that, have a most just title to be Princes over al the rest'.⁶³

The Horse as Icon

Although, in 1581–82 when Sidney was penning these thoughts, Shakespeare was still living in Stratford, there are two moments in his plays which exactly demonstrate the connection of nobility of character and the horse as an iconic symbol or, more accurately, a weather-vane of *virtu*, the human worth of a person as Sidney and Virgil used the word. The symbolic reading of the meaning of a horse and a noble rider, a perfect combination of the steed's flowing action and lithe

⁵⁹ For a broader sense of how well Sidney's aristocratic contemporaries would have known Virgil, see Charlton K., *Education in Renaissance England* (London: 1965); Clarke M.L., "Virgil in English Education since the Sixteenth Century," *Virgil Society Lecture Summaries* 39 (1957), cited in Tudeau-Clayton M., *Jonson, Shakespeare, and Early Modern Virgil* (Cambridge: 1998) 251; Clarke M.L., *Classical Education in Britain 1500–1900* (Cambridge: 1959).

⁶⁰ Bear, *Defence*, near n. 30, emphasis mine.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, near n. 30.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

muscle and the rider's learning, control and agency, was obvious and meaningful to all at the time and not merely to the aristocracy. This, of course, did not preclude the upper classes exploiting the powerful impression they could make astride a stallion nor did it stop the lower classes from resenting their lowly status as the foot soldiers of life. Elizabeth I was known for her Progresses on horseback.⁶⁴ Similarly, her successor, James I, who was distant and retiring among crowds by nature and who had suffered from weak legs since childhood, was chary about being seen in public except mounted on a horse.⁶⁵

A horse, the creature of soldiering, the jousting knight's *sine qua non*, the representation of active knowledge, skill and discipline, showed the ruler as worthy of the office. Richard III who, as depicted in Shakespeare's famous version, had slain children, seduced innocents, betrayed and plotted in a merciless way, lost his horse and with it his kingdom. Although his literary *cri de coeur*⁶⁶ signified to him that he had lost his kingdom for want of a horse, by then we in the audience, no less than Shakespeare's groundlings, know that such a man was neither worthy of so noble a beast nor so honorific a role. He had no horse because he was not fit to be king.

To be astride a horse meant that passion and discipline, restraint and speed, height and skill, judgment, learning and wisdom, as well as *active* agency, were in one's *armamentarium*. Male or female, one could soldier on and govern virtuously. More subtly than in *Richard III*, Shakespeare gradually strips King Lear of his horses, as he loses competency and sanity. In the last scene of the fifth act, however, he carries his daughter, hanged and dead, from her prison cell and then his heart and breath give out from the extreme effort. That image of the very old father carrying the daughter, an inverse Pieta tableau, is pointed by a dialogue in which one of the villain Edmund's servants refuses to do the office of a beast and can only do that which applies to a man, however nefarious: 'I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats./

⁶⁴ See Archer J.E. et al., (eds.), *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: 2007) *passim*.

⁶⁵ Bergeron D.M., *Royal Family, Royal Lovers* (Columbia, Mo.: 1991) 68; 38; 76; 100. In contrast, his son Henry was martial by inclination, typically depicted as a knight in armour, as in Henry Peacham's book, *Minerva Britanna* (London, Walter Dight: 1612) 17, dedicated to the prince among others.

⁶⁶ Shakespeare William, *King Richard III*, V, iv, 7, and 13, in *The Riverside Shakespeare* 753.

If it be man's work, I'll do't'.⁶⁷ That nameless Captain killed Cordelia in prison, by implication, and the next we see of Lear, the displaced monarch, he is carrying his daughter as a beast of burden might be expected to do.

A wicked man will murder but not do the work of a horse. A wise man knows he could do worse than *be* a horse, and so by way of one of the most tragic moments on and from the Jacobean stage, we find ourselves twenty-five years earlier at one of the central jokes of Sidney's opening of *The Defence of Poesie*. There, he contemplates Pugliano making us believe we should all *be* horses and, thereby, gives us the opportunity to look in detail at the many streams and models that allowed him to set down his apparently jocular but coded and deeply learned Exordium on horsemanship.

Conclusion

Effectively, what Sidney composed for the court world, if the context of his work is scrutinized in this way, is something akin to a *roman à clef*. *Unnamed* allusions to older writers such as Ascham and Elyot, Sturm, Languet, Melanchton and the Phillipists, Xenophon in *On Horsemanship* and, above all, Virgil in *The Georgics* form a subtext about self-control, breeding and animal husbandry, sexual behaviour and war, in which the heroes and the authors, though not always the names of the texts, *are* mentioned in the main body of the *Defence*. What is not hidden to us by the differences in modern and early modern culture is that horses and riders have an intimate bond, that hours of practice and companionship are involved in enhancing the relationship and that the animal in its stance, height and movement is dramatic. Riding is still a performance, and it creates an impression. To be able to control so large an animal and to perform with grace and pleasure so that the animal seems a willing partner involve attitudes to will, to training, to power and to self-confidence. Education, how best to impose *our* values and priorities upon a much more powerful being, is involved in the relationship, as it is in a treatise that is a dialogue with a monarch about tyranny. These are ethical issues in that they

⁶⁷ Shakespeare William, *King Lear*, V, iii, 38, 39, in *The Riverside Shakespeare* 1291.

involve relationship, and they are moral issues in that they involve our sense of what is right. Thus, contained in horsemanship, now as then, is always a dyadic relationship that demonstrates both education and learning as well as performance. Horsemanship is allied both to schooling and to theatre.

Sidney is also exploiting, in the best sense, those aspects of drama and symbol that announce themselves when a mounted horse is well managed and trusting. I hope this essay has not only shed some light on the now obscure elements of the mini treatise on horsemanship but has also demonstrated, in part through recovery of Sidney's allusion to Virgil's timeless lines of verse, how these nearly universal impressions, that transcend both time and class, play out beyond these glancing remarks.

If we were to speak of salient qualities of a twenty-first century statesman, despite status symbols and other commonalities between horses and cars, we would be unlikely to speak of his, or her, *relationship* to a personally owned automobile: we would be unlikely to call such an imputed 'relationship' *moral*, nor would we assign an *intellectual* component to a public servant's choice of car. The differences between daily dependence on machines and sensate creatures give rise to entirely different attitudes to education, character and leadership. Those are the differences that a focus on Sidney's opening to *The Defence of Poesie* make clear. That opening is, in effect, a short treatise on horsemanship as the training ground for resisting the tyrannical imposition of our will on sentient beings and therefore serves as the high road to virtue. By examining some of the associations that emerge in and around Sidney's equestrian Exordium, it becomes quite clear that, in the culture of Renaissance England, the relationship of a wellborn man to his horse betokened not only social standing but morality, humanity, skill, discipline and learning. In turn, this array of associations suggested the gentleman's or aristocrat's capacity to comport himself admirably in all matters of judgement concerning power: in war, in sexual love and in other collaborative or hierarchical relations among people and their equestrian transport.

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THE LEGACY OF FEDERICO GRISONE

Elizabeth M. Tobey

In the autumn of 2010, the elegant Dutch black stallion, Moorlands Totilas and his rider, Edward Gal, created headlines at the World Equestrian Games at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky, as they gave nearly flawless performances in the dressage ring. The unified and seemingly effortless collaboration of rider and horse embodied an ideal first expressed almost half a millennium ago by the Neapolitan riding master, Federico Grisone. The modern equestrian sport of dressage (from the French *dresser*, which means ‘to train’) evolved from another form of horsemanship known as the *manège*, the classical riding practised at the courts of early modern Europe. The French term *manège* derives from the Italian verb *maneggiare* (to manage or train) employed by Grisone in his treatise, *Gli ordini di cavalcare* (The Rules of Riding), first published in Naples in 1550. Although Grisone was not the inventor of *manège* riding, he was the first author to publish a treatise and present horsemanship as a noble art form.

Grisone was also the first author to record the names of *manège* movements and the first to construct a diagram illustrating how to ride the two principle foundations of the discipline – the *volta* and the *repolone*. Sixteenth and seventeenth century masters, from John Astley to William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, made reference to Grisone and his methods in their own treatises. Some of these masters, as well as modern-day historians, have singled out passages in the *Ordini* describing cruel punishments of the horse and have rejected Grisone’s methods as brutal. However, they may have read these passages out of context without acknowledging Grisone’s more humane and perceptive training philosophies. Lastly, Grisone demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the contact between the horse’s mouth and the rider’s hand that is surprisingly up to date and recognizable to modern riders and trainers.

Currently, I am preparing an edited modern English translation of the *Ordini* for publication with the Arizona Center for Medieval

and Renaissance Studies. As the source, I used the 1550 first edition of the *Ordini*, deposited in the Ludwig von Hünersdorf Collection at the National Sporting Library & Museum in Middleburg VA, which I translated in collaboration with the Italian literature scholar, Federica Deigan.¹ The Library's F. Ambrose Clark Rare Book Room is an important repository of sixteenth and seventeenth century treatises on horsemanship and holds no fewer than nine copies of eight Italian editions of the *Ordini*, published between 1550 and 1620.² Despite its importance to the history of riding, there exists only one modern edition of the *Ordini* in Italian, and it has not been translated into English since Thomas Blundeville published an abridged version in England in 1560 under the title *A newe booke containing the arte of rydyng, and breaking greate horses*.³ I embarked on this translation project out of a desire to make Grisone's text more accessible to equestrians and scholars who cannot read the original Italian.

¹ The translation project would not have been possible without the support of the National Sporting Library & Museum and the John H. Daniels Fellowship. I transcribed the 1550 edition of the *Ordini* and completed the first draft of the translation with the assistance of Dr. Deigan during the twelve months in 2007 when I held a Daniels Fellowship at the Library. I am especially indebted to John H. and Martha Daniels and their daughter, Martha Daniels, whose financial support and vision led to the creation of the fellowship at the Library. David Guy, a dressage rider and instructor from Flemington NJ, assisted me greatly in reviewing the translation and answering my questions regarding dressage. I would also like to thank Nancy H. Parsons, the former President & CEO of the Library as well as Richard Stoutamyer, the present Executive Director and Lisa Campbell, the Librarian.

² The National Sporting Library & Museum has a greater number of Italian editions of the *Ordini* than any other library in the United States and is second only to the University of Bologna, which owns ten editions, in holdings worldwide. The National Sporting Library & Museum also owns nine copies of eight translated editions of the *Ordini* in French, English, and German.

³ Mario Gennero published an Italian edition of the *Ordini* in 2000 with the equestrian publishing house, Equilibri. Unfortunately, this edition is out of print and is extremely hard to find outside Europe. The text is a transcription of the 1610 Italian edition printed by Andrea Muschio in Venice. Gennero included an introductory essay, a bibliography of editions and translations, and a glossary of horsemanship terms. Grisone Federico, *Degli Ordini di Cavalcare*, ed. M. Gennero, *I classici dell'equitazione I* (Viterbo: 2000). Blundeville's English translation was reprinted ten times between 1560 and 1609 under the titles *The Arte of Rydyng* and *The Fower Chiefyst Offices belonging to Horsemanshippe*. Da Capo Press published a facsimile of the 1560 edition in 1969. Blundeville T., *The art of riding and breaking greate horses, The English Experience, Its Record in Early Printed Books Published in Facsimile 118* (Amsterdam and New York: 1969).

Federico Grisone

Little is known about the biographical details of Grisone's life or the precise date of composition of the *Ordini*. Until more archival work is undertaken, only scant references can be gleaned from Grisone's Neapolitan contemporaries, Giovan Battista Ferraro and Pasquale Caracciolo. Ferraro mentions Grisone and his teacher, Cola (Nicola) Pagano, in a section of his horsemanship treatise, *Delle razze disciplina del cavalcare et alter cose pertinent ad Essercitio* (On the breeds and discipline of riding and other things pertinent to this exercise), published in 1560. Ferraro launches into an exhaustive genealogy of various riding masters and their schools in the second book of his treatise, identifying two of Grisone's teachers, Nicola Pagano and Giovanni Girolamo Monaco. According to Ferraro, Grisone had received instruction from the riding master, 'Cola Pagano', who had spent time in England in the service of the English king (probably Henry VIII, an accomplished rider) before returning to Naples. There, he spent the rest of his life as riding master to Philibert of Châlon, Prince of Orange, who served as Charles V's commander in Italy and Viceroy of Naples between 1528 and 1530. Ferraro also claims that Nicola learned his profession from his father, Monte Pagano, the riding master of Ferdinand I (Ferrante) of Aragon, who ruled Naples from 1458 to 1494.⁴ The eighteenth-century Neapolitan horseman, Don Giuseppe d'Alessandro, the Duke of Pescolanciano, also identifies 'Nicolò Pagano' as the master of Federico Grisone'.⁵

In Book 2 of the *Ordini*, Grisone himself mentions 'a great rider, Master Cola Pagano, who would have never galloped a horse for anything in the world until he was solid and completely trained'.⁶ Ferraro alleges that Grisone's previous master, Giovanni Girolamo Monaco, worked for Troiano, Count of Melfi, a city in the region of Basilicata. Troiano of Melfi may be identified as Troiano II, a member of

⁴ Ferraro Giovan Battista, *Delle razze disciplina del cavalcare et alter cose pertinenti ad Essercitio* (Campagna, Giovanni Domenico Niblio: 1560; Campagna, Giovanni Francesco Scaglione: 1570) 51v.

⁵ Pescolanciano (Duke of) D. Guiseppe d'Alessandro, *Pietra paragone de'cavalieri di D. Giuseppe d'Peschiolanciano, divisa in cinque libri [...]* (Naples, D.A. Parrino: 1711) 335.

⁶ Grisone Federico, *Gli ordini di cavalcare* (Naples, G. Sukanappo, 1550) 44r–44v. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Ordini* quoted in this article are by Elizabeth Tobey and Federica Deigan.

the noble Caracciolo family, on whom Frederick I of Aragon, the King of Naples (1452–1504), bestowed the title of Prince of Melfi on 17 December 1498.⁷ If Ferraro's story is correct, Grisone's formative period probably occurred after 1498 in the first or second decade of the sixteenth century.

Without citing the source of the date, several modern authors of histories of riding contend that Grisone founded his riding academy in Naples in the 1530s.⁸ Although unproved, it is nonetheless a plausible date since it was in 1532 that the Spaniard, Pedro Álvarez de Toledo, the Marquis of Villafranca del Bierzo, assumed power as Viceroy of Naples on behalf of Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain). During his twenty-one year rule, Álvarez de Toledo brought order to the kingdom, subduing the quarrelling noble barons throughout its territories in southern Italy and overseeing the city's urban renewal, including the construction of stables and palaces.⁹ Grisone must have composed his treatise sometime between 1503 and 1550, although the exact date is unknown. Regarding the *terminus a quo*, Grisone mentions two valiant older horses who showed extreme courage at the Battles of Fornovo (1495) and Cerignola (1503).¹⁰ As for the *terminus ante quem*, the dedication of the treatise to Ippolito d'Este, the Cardinal of Ferrara, provides valuable evidence, although it is uncertain whether the author refers to Ippolito I (1479–1520) or his more famous nephew, Ippolito II (1509–1572). Ippolito II was an accomplished horseman and maintained a substantial stable at his palace in Ferrara.¹¹ If the treatise were dedicated to Ippolito II, Grisone must have written it sometime between 1539, when the younger D'Este was appointed Cardinal, and 1550, the publication date of the first edition of the book.

⁷ Frederick I of Aragon is also known as Frederick IV of Naples. "Principato Melfi" Website of the City of Melfi, <http://www.comune.melfi.pz.it/?p=214>.

⁸ Étienne Saurel claimed that Grisone founded his school in 1534 or 1539 under the direction of Ferrarese riding master, Cesare Fiaschi, while Sylvia Loch maintains that the school began in 1532. Saurel E., *Histoire de L'Équitation* (Paris: 1971) 208; Loch S., *Dressage: the Art of Classical Riding* (North Pomfret, Vermont: 1990) 42.

⁹ Labrot G., *Baroni in città. Residenze e comportamenti dell'aristocrazia napoletana, 1530–1734*, transl. Ruotolo R. (Naples: 1979) 39, 51, in Deriu E., *Le Cheval et la Cour: Pratiques Équestres et Milieux Curiaux, Italie et France* (PhD dissertation, Université de Paris XII – Paris Est, Val de Marne: 2008) 465, n. 1233, 1235.

¹⁰ Grisone, *Ordini* fols. 122v, 123r–v.

¹¹ Hollingsworth M., *The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition, and Everyday Life in the Court of a Borgia Prince* (London: 2004; Woodstock – New York: 2006) 265–266.

Interest in the *manège* spread via the instruction that the riding masters gave at their academies throughout Italy and even further afield as a result of the invitations they received to teach the skills at various European courts. As Edwards and Graham mention in the introduction to this volume, riding was among the arts that Baldassare Castiglione urged young noblemen to pursue. Noblemen from a number of countries, therefore, travelled to Italy to study riding in the academies. Antoine de Pluvinel, who founded a prestigious establishment at the court of Louis XIII in the early seventeenth century, was a student at Giovanni Battista Pignatelli's academy in Naples. Blundeville referred to an 'old Alexander the Italyon rider' and a 'sometime Grysones scholar', who is thought to have instructed Henry VIII of England.¹² No fewer than twenty-eight Italian riding masters emigrated to France between 1548 and 1690. The Pavian master, Claudio Corte, for instance, took up residencies at the French and English courts, while the Venetian, Marco de' Pavari, taught in Lyons. Both wrote treatises on horsemanship.¹³

It is clear from Ferraro's genealogy that by 1550 *manège* riding was not merely a localised practice confined to Naples but had spread to the courts of England, France, Flanders and Spain. Prominent riding masters such as the Respina family of Naples established dynasties, whose members taught the Duke of Milan and several viceroys of Naples. Ferraro names no fewer than four Italian masters – Annibale Ruffo, Ferraro Luigi da Taranto Piacentino, Marsilio Colla and Polidoro Schiavi – who taught Charles V, the most powerful man in Europe, the art of horsemanship. He also mentions Giovan Pietro Pugliano, immortalised by Philip Sidney in *The Defence of Poesie* (1595), as having served at the court of Charles V's brother, Ferdinand I, the Archduke of Austria and King of Bohemia. (1503–1564). The Mantuan master, Baldino Rovadino, taught in Italy, France and Flanders.¹⁴

¹² Blundeville, *Rydyngge*, Dedication.

¹³ Elisabetta Deriu has discovered a whole corpus of documents in the State Archives of Padua on the Accademia Delia, a riding academy founded in 1609, which hosted foreign students. Deriu, *Le Cheval et la Cour* 462, 469, 506–507.

¹⁴ Ferraro, *Delle razze disciplina* fols. 48r, 49r–v, 50v, 51v.

Dissemination of the Ordini

Because Grisone was the first master to commit the new art to print, it ensured that his practices reached a much wider audience than had hitherto been possible. The profusion of Italian editions and translations during the second half of the sixteenth century not only disseminated Grisone's ideas across Europe but inspired other riding masters to compose their own works. Between 1550 and 1620, no fewer than twenty-three Italian editions were printed in Naples, Pesaro, Padua, and Venice. The Italian editions from 1565 onwards included appended content on horse breeding, the qualities of the ideal stallion and equine anatomy and illness. The supplementary material was almost certainly not written by Grisone. Some may be attributable to other authors and the rest to a close adaptation of passages from Giovan Battista Ferraro's 1560 treatise.¹⁵

Grisone's treatise was translated into French, English, German and Spanish within two decades of 1550. At least thirteen French editions, translated by Bernard de Du Poy-Monclar Luc, appeared in print between 1559 and 1615, and Patrice Franchet d'Espèrey edited a modern edition of this translation in 2002.¹⁶ The first English version, written by Thomas Blundeville and dedicated to Sir Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I's Master of the Horse, followed in 1560. Plagued by Grisone's disorganised and repetitious text, Blundeville abridged and condensed the four books of Grisone's treatise into three, commenting that his readers and riders, '[...] shall have just occasion to be thankfull, bothe to Grisone for the first invention of the matter, and also to me for disposing and reducing the same into a playne forme and order of teachinge'.¹⁷

The *Ordini* underwent three separate translations into German between 1560 and 1570. Joseph Höchstetter translated the text in

¹⁵ In the 1571 edition of the *Ordini*, the publisher, Luigi Valuassori, attributes some postscripts added to the text from 1565 onwards to Gaspare Rivera of Aquila and an unspecified author. The 'notable findings' (*notabili avvertimenti*) of the latter include information on horse breeding, anatomy, illnesses of the horse and effects of surgery. Valuassori Luigi, "Ai Lettori," Grisone Federico (Venice, Giovanni Andrea Valuassori detto Guadagnino: 1571) unpaginated.

¹⁶ Grisone Federico, *L'escuirie du S. Federic Grison, gentilhomme napolitain*, transl. Du Poy-Monclar de Luc Bernard (trans.), ed. Franchet d'Espèrey P., *Bibliothèque de l'écuyer* (Houilles, France: 2002).

¹⁷ Blundeville, Rydyngge, unpaginated.

1560 and two autograph manuscripts survive in the collections of the Michigan State University Library in East Lansing MI and in the University of Heidelberg's Library in Germany. According to the bibliographic record in Michigan State's online catalogue, Vait Tufft and Hans Froehlich utilised the Höchstetter manuscript when preparing the first printed edition of the *Ordini* in German, published in Augsburg in 1566.¹⁸ The authors added a fifth book on stud farm management and equine diseases. Johannes Fayser carried out a more radical translation of the *Ordini*, re-ordering the text (which he compared to pruning an overgrown garden) into six books and adding a section on tournaments. Fayser's version is the most heavily-illustrated of all the editions of the *Ordini*, with eighty-six woodcuts by the artist, Jost Amman.¹⁹ Fayser's translation went through six printings from 1570 to 1623 and two modern facsimiles were published in 1961 and 1972 respectively. Given the long tradition of horsemanship on the Iberian peninsula and the Spanish rule in Naples, where Grisone founded his school, not surprisingly a Spanish version of the *Ordini* soon appeared. The National Library in Madrid owns a manuscript illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings of a riding diagram and six pages of bits. The only printed translation was undertaken by Antonio Florez de Benavides and published in 1568.

*Codification of Riding in the Ordini and its Establishment
as an Art Form*

As the *Ordini* was the first printed text to record the teaching of the *manège*, already an established art by 1550, Grisone had no specific model to follow for the format of his text. He therefore adopted the general design of other manuals of the period, especially those on the teaching of dance. One can find many parallels between Grisone's *Ordini* and Renaissance dance treatises written by masters such as

¹⁸ See bibliography under "GRISONE FEDERICO" for citations of the manuscript and print editions of the *Ordini* in German.

¹⁹ I am indebted to my colleague, Pia Cuneo, for sharing with me the manuscript of the paper she presented at the 2008 Sixteenth Century Studies Conference on German translations of Grisone. Cuneo P., "Translation as Appropriation: Sixteenth-century German Translations of Grisone and Issues of Regional and Professional Identities" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, St. Louis, MO, October 2008) 3–4.

Domenico da Piacenza, Antonio Cornazano, and Guglielmo Ebreo of Pesaro in the fifteenth century and published in the following one. Guglielmo Ebreo's *De Practica Seu Arte Tripudii* (On the Practice or Art of Dancing), one of the earliest surviving Renaissance treatises on dance, was completed at the Sforza court in Milan in 1463. Although Ebreo claimed authorship, Barbara Sparti attributes its composition to court humanists such as Pagano of Rho or Mario Filelfo.²⁰ The treatise begins by placing music (the foundation of dance) among the liberal arts and cites the views of ancient authors on the origins of music. Likewise, in Book 1 of the *Ordini*, Grisone mentions the names of individuals from history and mythology, including Alexander the Great and his mount, Bucephalus, and Bellerophon, whom he credits with inventing horsemanship.²¹

As Jennifer Nevile shows in her study of dance in the fifteenth century, these masters elevated dance into an art form because it engaged the practitioner's intellect and reason'.²² Ebreo, for instance, states that dance appealed to the dancer's intellect through the senses.²³ Another dance master, Fabrizio Caroso da Sermoneta, argues that, as dance was conjoined with the arts of music and poetry, it expresses the soul's emotions through means of the body. It is, therefore, an art form suitable for the *persona nobile* (noble person) and when it is lacking, is a source of imperfection.²⁴ Similarly, Grisone extols horsemanship as a noble art, in which the rider's intellect (*ingegno*) was as important to learning as the exercise of his body (*col travaglio del corpo*):

And this art is equally as difficult and worthy of praise as it requires one to employ time and measure. [...] Following a widespread belief that one can learn more through the toil of the body than from words, there will be those who will judge my work a vain effort. Nevertheless, knowing that perfect mastery of an art can indeed result from the intellect nourished by what we hear or read, (even without the aid of images) and wishing the common good, whatever it may be, it seemed to me that I should publish these rules in the manner you can see above.²⁵

²⁰ Sparti B., "Status and Description of *De practica*", Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro, *De Practica Seu Arte Tripudii: On the Practice or Art of Dancing* (Oxford: 1993) 6.

²¹ Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 2rv.

²² Nevile J., *The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Bloomington – Indianapolis, Indiana: 2004) 104. See Chapter 4 on "Dance and the Intellect".

²³ Ebreo, *Art of Dancing* 89.

²⁴ "Ai lettori," Caroso Fabrizio da Sermoneta, *Il Ballarino di M. Fabritio Caroso da Sermoneta Diviso in due Trattati* (Venice, Francesco Ziletti: 1581), unpaginated.

²⁵ Grisone, *Ordini* 1rv.

The art of riding uncovered not only the rider's virtue, Grisone contends, but that of the horse:

And do not think that the horse, although he is well put-together by nature, can work well on his own, without human aid and true teaching. It is necessary to awaken the parts of his body and the hidden virtues that are within him through means of the art of riding, and through true order and good discipline his goodness will become manifest to a greater or lesser degree. On the contrary, when the art of riding is false, it ruins him, and hides every good quality, therefore when it is good it compensates the many areas in his nature where he is lacking. And deservedly the name "horse", in the Latin language, means none other than "even", because [...] the horse very much needs measure in everything [...] Even and regal, he becomes one with the will of the rider who sits upon him.²⁶

Notice Grisone's assertion that *misura* ('measure') is the principle necessary to good riding. The word *misura* appears fifty-three times in the *Ordini* and in all but three instances it refers to the timing of the *manège* movements. The term derives from the disciplines of music and dance, Ebreo, for instance, listing it as the first of six principle elements of the art.²⁷ He claims that *misura* and tempo were interdependent for 'the person who wishes to dance must regulate and gauge himself, and must so perfectly accord his movements with it and in such a way that his steps will be in perfect accord with the aforesaid tempo and measure and will be regulated by that measure.'²⁸ *Misura* in the art of dance expressed the Renaissance ideal of proportion derived from Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy.²⁹ Applied to horsemanship, possession of *misura* was an indication of the rider's mastery and, therefore, suitability to rule.³⁰ A rider with *misura* knew how to modulate the horse's speed according to the desired tempo of the *manège* movement. Grisone discusses the horse's performance of the *posate* (brief risings upon the hindquarters with the forefeet in the air), *tutto tempo* (in whole time, with two rests between movements), *mezzo tempo* (half time, with one rest between movements) and *contra*

²⁶ Ibid., fol. 10r-v.

²⁷ Ebreo, *Art of Dancing* 93.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Neville, *The Eloquent Body* 76.

³⁰ Van Orden K., "From Gens d'Armes to Gentilshommes: Dressage, Civility, and the Ballet À Cheval", in Raber K. – Tucker T. (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: 2005) 207.

tempo (performed without rest).³¹ Cesare Fiaschi, a contemporary of Grisone, even includes musical notation for commands used to aid the horse in performing movements at a certain tempo.³²

In addition to *misura*, *manège* riding borrowed other words from dance, including *salto*, *capriola*, *galoppo gagliardo* and *volta/mezza volta*.³³ In Book 4 Grisone explains the teaching of the *capriola*, in which the horse bounds into the air and kicks out behind.³⁴ Derived from *capra* (goat), the movement became known by its French equivalent, *capriole*, and is still found in the repertoire of modern elite equestrian troupes such as the Spanish Riding School in Vienna and the Cadre Noir of the Saumur Academy in France. Fabrizio Carosa da Sermoneta listed five kinds of *capriole* in his dance treatise. When performing the *capriole in terzo*, for instance, a dancer placed his hands on a stool and, lifting himself up by the weight of his arms, extended one leg then the other three times in succession.³⁵ In the *galoppo gagliardo*, or the gallop galliard, the horse has to kick out with his hind legs once every specified number of strides.³⁶ Claudio Corte distinguishes the gallop galliard from the *capriole*, observing that the *capriole* consists of a succession of jumps following one after another, whereas in the gallop galliard, the horse takes two to three strides between leaps.³⁷ The galliard was a dance popular among university students in the Renaissance and was performed in three-halves, three-eighths, or three-quarter time.³⁸ In Book 4 Grisone instructs the rider on how to teach the horse the *ciambetta*. In this action, the horse rises upon his hindquarters with his forelegs elevated and, leading with one foreleg, navigates around a tight circle, crossing one leg over the other.³⁹ Although the *ciambetta* is no longer part of *haute école* riding, it is probably the ancestor of the canter pirouette, a lateral movement in the dressage arena, in which the horse pivots its body on a circle.

³¹ Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 27v.

³² Fiaschi Cesare, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare, maneggiare, et ferrare cavalli diviso in tre parti* (Bologna, Anselmo Giaccarelli: 1556) 114–126.

³³ Some of these references can be found in Sparti's "Glossary of Dance, Music, and Humanistic Terms", in Ebreo, *Art of Dancing* 217–228.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 107v, 108r.

³⁵ Caroso da Sermoneta Fabrizio, *Il Ballarino di M. Fabritio Caroso da Sermoneta Diviso in due Trattati* (Venice, Francesco Ziletti: 1581) fols. 2v, 12v.

³⁶ Grisone, *Ordini* 24.

³⁷ Corte Claudio, *Il Cavallarizzo* (Venice, Giordano Ziletti: 1562) fol. 72v.

³⁸ Raffe W.G. – Purder M.E., *Dictionary of the Dance* (New York: 1964) 193.

³⁹ Grisone, *Ordini* 108–113.

Diagrams of Schooling the Horse in the Ordini

The *Ordini* was also revolutionary in that it features perhaps the earliest examples of an illustrator's attempt to depict the movements of the *manège*. The 1550 edition of Grisone contains woodcut illustrations of different kinds of bits described by the author, as well as two schooling diagrams: one in Book 2 and the second in Book 3.⁴⁰ Authors prior to Grisone included illustrations of bits in veterinary and biting manuals, so these were not new.⁴¹ However, the schooling diagrams were completely novel.

In Book I, Grisone explains the benefits of riding the horse on the *torni* (rings), which he advises should be introduced early in the horse's training, once the horse had become accustomed to a rider on his back. According to his contemporary, Giovan Battista Ferraro, Grisone's teacher, Cola Pagano, was the inventor of the rings, as they were practised in the sixteenth century.⁴² Grisone borrows a word from the graphic arts – the verb *stampare*, “to print” – when instructing the rider to stamp out these rings by riding the horse in the loose earth of a fallow field.⁴³

Grisone gives an exact dimension for these rings – 250 palms – which, when translated into metrics, indicates a circle twenty metres in diameter, the same dimension as is used in riding today.⁴⁴ Working a horse on a circle in both directions helps to strengthen the muscles on both flanks, and also establishes “bend”, a slight curvature of the body, an essential component of correct riding. As the horse builds up endurance over the course of training, Grisone advises increasing the number of rings ridden, adding four rings to the exercise each day until the horse can execute forty-six rings in one session.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ The first diagram is on fol. 55r and the second on fol. 84v.

⁴¹ Two examples are Rusio Lorenzo, *Hippatria sive Marescalia Laurentiis Rusii* (Paris, Christian Wechel: 1532); Ruffo Giordano, *Libro dela natura dei cavalli* (Venice, Francesco Bindoni and Mafeo Pasini: 1544).

⁴² Ferraro, *Delle razze disciplina del cavalcare* fol. 51v.

⁴³ Grisone, *Ordini* fols. 13v and 14r.

⁴⁴ If we assume that the 250 palms refers to the path around the circle or circumference, based on the conversion of .2637 meters for 1 Neapolitan *palm*, the diameter of the circle would be 20.995 metres: Zupko R.E., *Italian Weights and Measures from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: 1981). The dressage rider and trainer, David Guy, has pointed out that this is about the same size as the 20-metre circle that is the standard size used in riding arenas today.

⁴⁵ Grisone, *Ordini* fols. 15r and 16r.

Grisone also explains the relationship of the rings to the *manège* movement called the *volta*. The movement, which he called the *volta*, comprised four revolutions or *giri* around the rings (*torni*), and to perform it, the horse would complete two rings in each direction, for a total of four revolutions. Therefore, each *torno* is also a *quarto*, a quarter of a whole *volta*.⁴⁶ The *Volta tonda* in Renaissance dance was a full turn, always starting on the dancer's right foot⁴⁷ and possibly a reason why the equestrian *volta* began on the right. Grisone's use of the term *volta* should not be confused with the *volte* which are part of the repertoire of modern-day dressage. The United States Dressage Federation defines the *volte* as a circle of six metres or smaller in diameter.⁴⁸ Yet Grisone's *volta* was made up of several circles or *torni* (single revolutions). To avoid confusion with the modern *volte*, I have translated *volta* as "turn on the rings".

For brevity's sake, I will only discuss the first of the two riding diagrams (Fig. 1) on page fifty-five of the manual. One is struck by the overtly phallic shape of the diagram, yet I believe this is more coincidental than intentional on the part of the author and illustrator. The diagram is significant in that it guides the rider through three of the main components of the *manège*, the foundations upon which more complex manoeuvres were based. The exercise incorporated three important movements: the wide turns on the rings at the bottom in both directions; the *repolone* or straightaway in the middle of the diagram; and the narrow turn or circle at the top used to reverse direction.⁴⁹ Looking at the diagram, one sees a label at the very bottom – *Da qui si entra* (Here, one enters) – instructing the rider where to begin the rings. Grisone tells the rider to complete two revolutions on each flank, starting with the right hand side.⁵⁰ Next, Grisone instructs the rider to ride the horse along the furrow, shown on the diagram as the vertical path leading from the two rings to the smaller circle at the top of the diagram. A straight path connects the rings at the bottom to a smaller circle at the top. Finally, the diagram depicts the narrow turn circle

⁴⁶ Ibid., fol. 49v.

⁴⁷ See *volta tonda* in Glossary, Ebreo, *Art of Dancing* 228.

⁴⁸ Lundquist B., *Training of the Young or Untrained Horse*, United States Dressage Federation, United States Dressage Federation Manual (1995) 211.

⁴⁹ *Repelóni* – 'Looke *Maneggiare a repoloni*, which is when a horse doth gallop in a right path: and still returneth in the same, it is now called in English a *repolone*'. Florio John, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (London: 1611) 429.

⁵⁰ Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 55v.

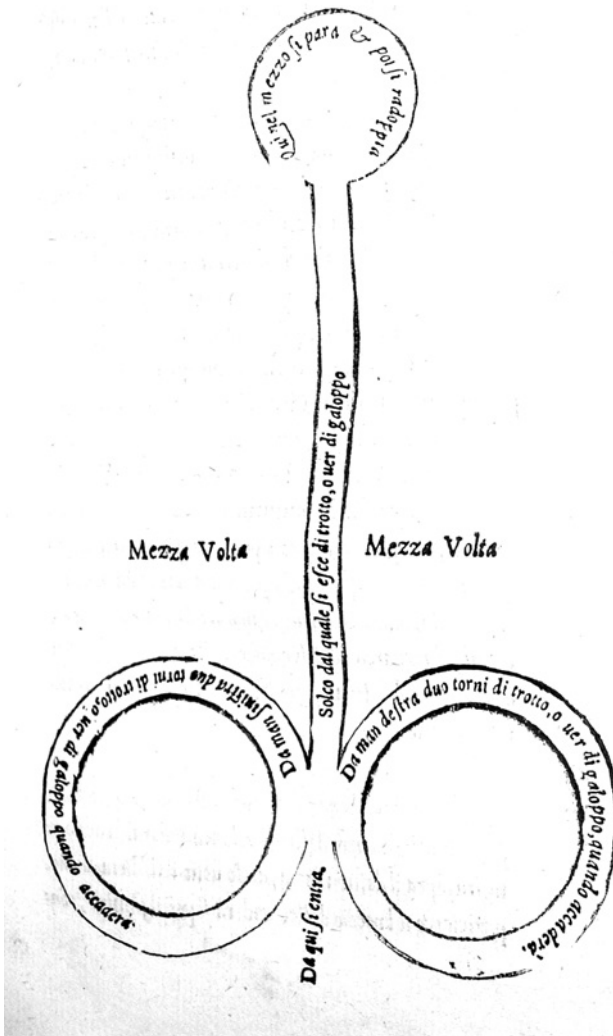


Fig. 1. Woodcut illustration to Federico Grisone's *Gli ordini di cavalcare* (Naples, G. Sukanappo: 1550) 55. Image © National Sporting Library & Museum. Riding diagram.

(*volta stretta*) upon which the horse 'doubles back' (*si raddoppia*), thus reversing direction. The small circle at the top of the diagram indicates the horse's rotation of its entire body around the circle in one

direction and then in the opposite direction, following which the horse proceeds down the furrow to the two rings where he finishes with two revolutions on the right-hand ring.⁵¹

By including the diagram and explaining how it is to be ridden, Grisone presented to the reader an exercise that incorporated the three main components of *manège* riding – the turns on the rings, the *repolone* and the doubling back. I will try to explain briefly the purpose and application of each element. The turns on the rings that made up the *volta* probably served a useful purpose in teaching the horse how to move in different directions and bend his body around the centre of the circle. In modern equitation, riding a horse on a figure-eight pattern composed of two conjoined 20-metre circles or on a serpentine (an ‘S’ shape, but with three loops instead of two) is one of the best ways to condition his muscles on his left and right sides. When riding the horse on the figure-eight at the canter, the rider must ask the horse to change leads whenever crossing the centre and proceeding onto the second circle.⁵² In the early-seventeenth century manuscript written by Valerio Piccardini, whom Deriu has identified as one of the instructors at the Accademia Delia in Padua, there are diagrams of both the figure-eight and the serpentine (labelled *biscia* or ‘viper’). In the text below the figure-eight Piccardini explains its utility in teaching canter-lead changes. An adjoining diagram shows three conjoined circles, which Piccardini points out should be ridden at the canter in both directions in order to teach the horse to change leads (*cambiar mano*). It was used to maintain the endurance and obedience of the horse for war.⁵³ Grisone also addresses the function of the rings in developing endurance and advises the trainer to augment the number of rings by

⁵¹ Ibid., fol. 55v.

⁵² When a horse goes into the canter, a natural three-beat gait, he should always ‘lead’ or begin his first stride with the foreleg, that is, on the side of the bend of the circle. In the figure-eight, when the horse proceeds from one circle to another, he is compelled by the shape to change the bend of his body and therefore change his lead. Although some horses learn to change leads without the help of the rider, others need schooling in this.

⁵³ Piccardini Valerio, *Scritti De Cavaleria, Giustezza de manegi, et effetti delle Briglie*, undated manuscript (17th. Century), National Sporting Library & Museum, Middleburg, VI.

one for each training session until the horse could do forty-six rings (eleven-and-a-half *volta*).⁵⁴

What was the practical application of the rings, other than as a training exercise? Grisone alludes to readying the horse for war and accustoming him to the sounds of combat, and almost certainly, the exercise of the rings would have prepared the horse to take evasive action on the battlefield.⁵⁵ The rings surely also had a practical application in the horse ballets or *carrousel*s that became popular at Italian, French and Austrian courts in the late sixteenth century. Numerous *cavallerie* or horse ballets were staged in Ferrara at the court of Duke Alfonso d'Este in the 1560s and 1570s.⁵⁶ De Pluvinel produced horse ballets or *carrousel*s at the French court.⁵⁷ Large numbers of highly-trained horses executed precise movements in synchronization in the equestrian ballets staged for royal weddings in the Piazza Santa Croce and the courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, which were recorded in several engravings by Florentine print-makers. A print by Stefano della Bella depicting an equestrian ballet, which took place in the Boboli Gardens in Florence, has a central image framed by bird's eye vignettes, showing horses and riders forming ridden patterns such as concentric circles, cloverleaves and starbursts.⁵⁸ With so many horses moving within a small area, it would have been necessary for the rider to control with great precision the horse's movement and change leads. In the *Ordini*, Grisone mentions riding two horses in opposite directions on adjoining rings so they would become accustomed to passing near each other without colliding.⁵⁹ In this respect, I believe that the rings prepared the horse as much for participation in court spectacle as for combat.

⁵⁴ Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 16r-v.

⁵⁵ Further investigation of contemporary cavalry treatises is warranted to determine whether any of the *manège* movements were regularly employed in battle.

⁵⁶ Marcigliano A., "Cavallerie a Ferrara: 1561-1570", in Wisch B. - Scott Munshower S. (eds.), 'All the world's a stage...' *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance Baroque*, Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University 6, vol. II 417-457.

⁵⁷ van Orden, "From *Gens d'Armes* to *Gentilshommes*" 197-122.

⁵⁸ della Bella Stefano, *Equestrian Ballet Held in the Amphitheater of the Boboli Gardens: Armida's Chariot Drawn by Elephants with a Mountain and Serpent Before the Façade of the Palace* (dated July 15, 1637) in Blumenthal A.L., *Theater Art of the Medici, Dartmouth College Museum and Galleries* (Hanover, N.H. and London, England: 1980) 179-180, ill. 178.

⁵⁹ Grisone, *Ordini* fols. 104v, 105r.

The double-turn or narrow turn (*volta stretta*) at the top of the diagram and the straight path that connects the two both probably evolved from the practice of tilting at the barrier during tournaments. Due to the revival of interest in the Arthurian legends and the epic poems of the Crusades, tournaments enjoyed a resurgence in popularity at European courts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Courtiers, princes and kings took part in these festivities: Ippolito d'Este, Grisone's patron, participated in jousts and tournaments in his native Ferrara;⁶⁰ Henry VIII rode in jousts on the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520; and sixty-nine tournaments were staged during the reign of his daughter, Elizabeth I'.⁶¹ De Pluvinel includes illustrations of three types of jousts in his manual: tilting at rings, riding at the quintaine and breaking the lance. In one diagram the horse and rider are shown galloping parallel to a wooden barrier. Etymological evidence also suggests that the *repolone* derived from the joust. *Repolone* is a Neapolitan dialect version of the Spanish word *repelón*, meaning "a short gallop", and was replaced in later treatises by its French equivalent, *passade*, which de Pluvinel claimed was the most essential of the 'airs' (the advanced movements of the *manège*).⁶² Grisone devotes a good portion of Book 1 to these movements: instructing the horse and rider to gallop at high speed upon the *repolone*; to stop with the *posate* (thus setting the horse's weight upon his hindquarters); and then to turn the horse quickly in the opposite direction. In Book 1 Grisone writes about using a shallow ditch or cloth barrier (similar to the barrier sometimes used in tilts) when training the horse to perform the *repolone* and the turns at each end.⁶³

Grisone's woodcut diagrams appear quite crude but must have compelled authors of subsequent treatises to experiment with ways of explaining movement to their readers. Grisone's representation of the path of the *volte* and *repolone* with two linear boundaries became the standard way of representing these movements through the early part of the seventeenth century. The artist illustrating Pierantonio Ferraro's *Cavallo frenato* (The Bridled Horse) even inserted these linear

⁶⁰ Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat* 60.

⁶¹ Young A., *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (London: 1987) 201–205. The first and last recorded tournaments during Elizabeth I's reign took place at Whitehall in 1558 and 1602 respectively.

⁶² Pluvinel, *The Maneige Royal* 89–90.

⁶³ Grisone, *Ordini* fols. 32v, 33r.

diagrams in a scene of horses and riders practising their manoeuvres in the countryside.⁶⁴ Cesare Fiaschi introduced the use of horseshoe-shaped markers, which indicated where the horse's feet should be placed when beginning or ending a movement and included illustrations of a horse and rider on the *volte*.⁶⁵ Authors from Markham to Newcastle incorporated the horseshoe-markers into increasingly complex diagrams in the seventeenth century,⁶⁶ while modern dressage manuals display numerous diagrams of tests and exercises ridden in the dressage arena. The bird's eye view and use of the line to trace the horse's path are indeed quite similar to the strategy of representation used by Grisone almost five hundred years ago.

*Historical and Modern Responses to Grisone and
Re-assessment of the Ordini*

Historians of riding have tended to dismiss Grisone's treatise as particularly harsh and barbaric in the methods it advocates. Most of the criticism revolves around Blundeville's translation of the section of the *Ordini* that deals with the punishments meted out to horses. Yet some of these passages are taken out of their context and need to be re-examined in relation to Grisone's actual wording. Blundeville's Elizabethan prose further distances the modern reader from Grisone's original text, the foreignness of the language leading the reader to focus more upon the phrasing of the treatise than the actual content. While Grisone does indeed advocate physical correction and punishment of the horse, in many cases, he shows the rider how to substitute voice commands for them. Although de Pluvinel and Newcastle are usually credited for introducing gentler methods of training horses in the seventeenth century, Grisone much earlier presented a nuanced understanding of concepts present in horsemanship today, particularly that of contact.

⁶⁴ Ferraro Pirro Antonio, *Cavallo Frenato* (Naples: Antonio Pace: 1602) 41.

⁶⁵ Fiaschi, *Trattato dell'imbrigliare* 90, 109.

⁶⁶ Markham Gervase, *Cauelarice, or the English Horseman: contayning all the art of horse-manship... Together, with the discouery of the subtil trade or mystery of hor-scourers [...]* Newly imprinted, corrected & augmented, with many worthy secrets not before knowne (1607; London, E. Allde for E. White: 1617) 193.

Vladimir Littauer, the riding master who popularised 'Forward' riding in the twentieth century, reflects on Grisone's reputation for harsh methods, noting that, 'This cruelty stemmed from an attitude towards the horse that credited him with a more human type of mentality than we ascribe to him today.' According to Littauer, Grisone saw the harsh punishments as 'morally justified' due to a belief that the horse disobeyed out of stubbornness rather than fear or misunderstanding of commands.⁶⁷ Sylvia Loch is somewhat more charitable towards Grisone, stating that his treatise shows '[...] a surprisingly advanced understanding of the interplay of equilibrium and impulsion, as well as the idea of the supporting and opposing aids to assist the horse through his own balance [...]'. Even so, she also laments that, 'Too often there is a marked departure from Xenophon and a singular lack of understanding or sympathy about the mind of the horse'.⁶⁸ Both Littauer and Loch reproduce in their books an illustration from Fayser's 1570 German edition of three men on foot beating the horse with sticks, thus exacerbating Grisone's reputation for cruel methods.⁶⁹ Both also cite a passage, quoted from Blundeville, on hitting the horse about the head to punish him for refusing to approach the mounting block. In addition, Littauer reproduces an excerpt from Blundeville's translation of an infamous passage about curing a horse of baulking behaviour by thrusting a cat tied to a stick between the horse's legs or the tying of a porcupine to the horse's tail.

Grisone's reputation was certainly not helped by Newcastle's wholehearted rejection of him in *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention to Dress Horses*. Having read Grisone's treatise via Blundeville's translation, he dismissed everything from riding a horse on the rings, through the single and double turns and the bits illustrated in the book (which he deemed 'Ridiculous') to the punishments. Scornfully, he wrote that 'For a Resty [baulking] Horse they Raise a whole Town with Staves to Beat him, with many Curious Inventions, with Squirts, Fire, Whelps, Hedg-hoggs, Nailes, and I know what'.⁷⁰ Karen Raber, in an essay on Newcastle, perceives a subtext, arguing convincingly that

⁶⁷ Littauer V., *The Development of Modern Riding* (Princeton NJ: 1962; New York: 1991) 71–76.

⁶⁸ Loch S., *Dressage: The Art of Classical Riding* 42–43.

⁶⁹ The passage may be found in Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 11r–v.

⁷⁰ Cavendish William, *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention, to Dress Horses* (London, Thomas Milbourn: 1667) 18–23.

there is a nationalist bent to his criticisms of the works of other masters, since he presented his 'New Method' as superior to the ways of the Italian Grisone and French de Pluvinel.⁷¹

Littauer omits from his quotation Grisone's repeated warnings to readers not to avail themselves of these harsh punishments unless absolutely necessary. Prior to describing the corrective measures for baulking, Grisone says that it should be used '[...] only in instances of great necessity when the rider does not have the training, time nor restraint in subduing the horse and in making him realise his error'.⁷² Grisone attributes the tying of the porcupine ploy to his fellow Neapolitan master, Vincenzo Respino, who inflicted it upon a horse that had baulked for years. Commenting on Respino's action, he explains that 'although such a remedy was at the time necessary for correcting that misbehaviour, nevertheless I tell you that it would be an inappropriate thing to continually rely upon it, because it would make the horse giddy, despairing, and he would not always understand what you want'.⁷³ Grisone maintains that although it is necessary for his readers to know about the existence of such punishments, they are no substitute for learning the correct way of training the horse, which involved using his rules.⁷⁴

Grisone mentions the other punishments for the rider's edification but warns his readers that 'it is doubtful that any result can be obtained through them'. Later on in Book 3, Grisone describes the methods mentioned and decried by Newcastle to rouse a horse who has lain down upon the ground. These include squirting the horse with water in the eyes or goading the horse with a lit bundle of straw. Yet again, he argues that these methods are of little value to the rider who 'can have the same results without these methods, using his own virtue instead in different ways'.⁷⁵ Next, Grisone describes a method for dealing with a horse that lies down in a river, involving attaching a running loop of rope to the horse's scrotum. Once more, he refutes its employment except in extreme cases:

⁷¹ Raber K., "A Horse of a Different Color: National and Race in Early Modern Horsemanship Treatises," in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 226–233.

⁷² Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 96r.

⁷³ Ibid., fols. 96v and 97r.

⁷⁴ Ibid., fol. 97.

⁷⁵ Ibid., fol. 98.

Nevertheless, to me it seems to be ill-advised to use something that, when the horse continues to err, cannot only fail, but cruelly hurts his sanity, which the rules that I have talked about, on the whole, do not do [...]. One should use this loop *only in extreme need* on a horse that is perfidious and long-accustomed to stop and lie down in the water.⁷⁶

When instructing his reader on training the horse to do something new or curing a bad habit, Grisone describes the physical aids used to induce the horse to perform a particular action. In many instances, he urges the rider to use his voice so that the horse will make the association between the vocal cue and the desired behaviour. Once the horse makes the association, Grisone notes, the rider should use the voice commands in place of the aids. In the following passage, Grisone discusses correcting a young horse who mistakenly performs the *posate* against the rider's will [italicised text indicates author's emphasis].⁷⁷

If the horse has acquired the bad habit of stopping with the *posate* often against your will [...] you will punish him soon after with your voice and with a crop on the flanks, sometimes on the forelegs, and perhaps with the spurs [...] so that he does the *posate* only when you ask him using your voice, the clucking of your tongue, spurs, calves, or crop, all together or one or the other, according to his disposition [...]. Therefore, until he has a true understanding of this, when stopping, only the aid of your voice will be needed, and most of the time, reserve the use the spurs and the crop to punish him and to make him go forward freely.⁷⁸

Grisone proceeds to suggest a variety of voice commands to encourage the horse, such as the repetition of words or clucking to the horse with the tongue. The voice, Grisone maintained, is a powerful tool for rebuking the horse when he has made a mistake: 'You will speak angrily with a sharp rebuke [...] until the horse ceases to disobey, and you will raise or lower your voice according to the seriousness of his mistake. But when he stands corrected, then you should fall immediately silent'.

Yet it is equally important to reward the horse with pats and praise, while speaking in 'a pleasant and low tone' when he has performed well'.⁷⁹ In this respect, Grisone's actions are very similar to the employed by modern trainers. He uses the plural noun *carezze*

⁷⁶ Ibid., fol. 99v.

⁷⁷ Grisone, *Gli ordini* fol. 60r-v.

⁷⁸ Ibid., fols. 46v and 47r.

⁷⁹ Ibid., fols. 47r-48r.

(pats) and the verb *acarezzare* (to pat or stroke) no fewer than sixty-six times throughout his treatise, repeatedly reminding his rider to reward the horse for good behaviour. This practice of praising the horse is reflected in the works of some of the English writers who read Grisone's treatise, including John Astley, a contemporary and friend of Thomas Blundeville and Master of Elizabeth I's Jewel House. In his treatise, *The Art of Riding* (1584) he comments extensively on Xenophon's *The Art of Horsemanship* and Grisone's *Ordini*, referring *inter alia* to Xenophon's advice to 'cherish' the horse when he has done what you want and to punish him for resistance and disobedience.⁸⁰

Certainly, one should not condone the most severe examples of physical correction of the horse, as described in the *Ordini*. However, they need to be understood within the context of the treatise and of the time in which the manual was written. Grisone reserves the harshest punishments for extreme cases or mentions them as methods employed by those who do *not* follow his rules. He also repeatedly recommends that the rider should substitute vocal commands for physical aids whenever possible. Punishment of the horse is not unique to Grisone's treatise, since even masters such as de Pluvinel and Newcastle, whom modern scholars consider to be more humane in their training techniques, advocate punishment of the horse where appropriate. De Pluvinel instructed his student, Louis XIII, to punish a lazy horse with the spurs, which should 'arrive simultaneously at his belly at every hoof-beat and, if necessary, until you draw blood, according to your discretion'.⁸¹ Newcastle states that 'I seldom Beat them, or Punish them, with either Rod, or Spur, *but when I meet with a great Resistance, and that Rarely*'.⁸²

Grisone and the Concept of "Contact"

Apart from contextualizing his discussion of punishments, Grisone deserves recognition for being the first modern author to write about some of the cornerstones of training in *manège* and dressage riding, including contact, collection and using aids and work on the rings

⁸⁰ Astley John, *The Art of Riding*, The English Experience, Its Record in Early Printed Books Published in Facsimile 10 (1584; Amsterdam and New York: 1968) 12.

⁸¹ Pluvinel, *The Maneige Royal* 25.

⁸² Cavendish, *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention* 42.

to develop 'bend' in the horse. Due to space limitations, I will only address one of these concepts here, that of *appoggio* ("contact").

The Fédération Equestre Internationale, the international governing authority for equestrian sports such as dressage, defines contact as 'the soft, steady connection between the rider's hand and the horse's mouth'. Along with the natural aids of the rider's legs and seat and the artificial aids of the spurs and crop, the bit is one of the rider's primary means of communication with the horse. The bit is positioned in the horse's mouth in such a way that even slight manipulation of the reins can put the mouthpiece of the bit in contact with the sensitive, fleshy bars of the horse's mouth. Therefore, it is essential that the rider maintain a steady 'contact' with the horse's mouth so that he can issue commands to the horse, modulate the impulsion (forward movement), maintain balance in the horse and develop collection in the horse through the use of half-halts. The dressage rider and trainer, David Guy of Flemington NJ, who has assisted me in interpreting Grisone's *Ordini*, explains that 'Contact is needed to balance the horse, keep him supple, regulate impulsion, straighten the spine, guide around turns and bending lines, stopping and rein backs. In addition, it is used as an aid in collection through careful application of half halts and light halts'.⁸³

Contact is realised when the horse willingly accepts the bit.⁸⁴ Indicators that contact has been achieved include the horse's bending or flexing his neck so that the poll (the area between the ears where the horse's neck joins the head) is at its highest point. The horse's nose should be in line or slightly in front of the 'vertical', the imaginary line extending from the poll down the horse's face to the nose.⁸⁵ In proper

⁸³ Guy D. to Tobey E., email correspondence, March 24th, 2011. I am greatly indebted to David Guy for his assistance in explaining contact.

⁸⁴ Alois Podhajsky, former director of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, writes, "The traditional expression "contact" means that it is the horse that should seek the contact with the rider's hand. It should not be reversed, the rider trying to force the horse into a determined position of his head by means of the rein aids. This principle should be a guideline for every rider and trainer. And the judge should take it as a criterion, for by his severe verdict he should counteract the frequent endeavour of some riders to impose a position of head and neck to the horse by means of lever-like rein aids and torturous bits", Podhajsky A., *The Art of Dressage* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1976) 173.

⁸⁵ For more descriptions of contact, see Article 401, Item 5, "Object and General Principles of Dressage", Fédération Equestre Internationale, *Rules for Dressage Events* 24 (Lausanne: 2010) 10, available in PDF form at http://twww.fei.org/sites/default/files/file/DISCIPLINES/DRESSAGE/Rules/RULES_DRESSAGE_2011_BLACK-VERSION_web.pdf.

contact, the horse steps forward into the bit. A horse, who happily accepts the bit, will indicate his consent by working the mouthpiece in his mouth, inducing salivation. This is why one often sees horses in the dressage arena gently chewing and salivating at the bit: this indicates the horse's total acceptance of the bit and the rider's contact.

De Pluvinel wrote about contact as *appui* in his treatise, *Le maneige royale*.⁸⁶ Newcastle also used this term, when discussing fitting the mouthpiece to the mouth of the horse.⁸⁷ According to David Guy, Grisone presents a sophisticated account of contact, as expressed by the Italian term *appoggio*. The word first appears in Book I, at the point where he discusses setting the horse's head and neck after removing the false reins: 'Then, as during the time when he wore these [the false reins], likewise next you want to hold him with a steady hand and with soft contact. However, you should shorten the reins as he puts his head below. And once you know that his head is set correctly in its place, and he charges with his forehead, you do not need to do anything else but hold him in that same head position'.⁸⁸ 'Charges with his forehead' (*và à ferir con la fronte*) probably refers to the horse's alignment of his forehead and muzzle with the vertical, as with proper contact in modern riding. Grisone then instructs the rider, when schooling the young horse at a walk and trot in the loose earth of a fallow field, to maintain a certain firmness (*fermezza*) in his hand, thereby inviting the horse into contact and to place his head in the correct position:

But your firmness of hand should not be so much that he loses his temper, and the horse himself will miraculously lighten himself and accept the bit gladly with a soft contact, chewing or working it with his mouth. This firmness is one of the best things and of greater substance for setting the head of the horse. Even in the case when the horse moves his head up and down too much, the firmness will set his head as it should be, and once and for all.⁸⁹

In Book 2 Grisone introduces the various kinds of bits, divided into the two general categories of 'open' or 'closed' bits, that were available at the time. Open bits had a port – an arched section – in the middle of the mouthpiece, while 'closed bits', which were often more severe, lacked one. As Grisone explains, 'One sees clearly, that each time you

⁸⁶ Pluvinel, *The Maneige Royal* 22.

⁸⁷ Cavendish, *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention* 344.

⁸⁸ Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 33v.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

place an open bit in his mouth the tongue loses its defence, and is secured beneath the bit without impediment'.⁹⁰ In dealing with a horse, who does not have much feeling in the bars of his mouth, he warns against using harsh, one-piece mouthpieces or loading these with beads, rings and other accoutrements. Choosing the wrong bit or applying a heavy hand on a horse with unresponsive bars causes him to 'evade the bit's true contact'. The horse becomes preoccupied with protecting his mouth from the bit, rather than listening to his rider's instructions and working as one with him. Grisone therefore advises using an 'open' or ported bit to allow more space for the horse's tongue.

In Book 4, Grisone explains the crucial role of the rider in maintaining the horse's balance and stamina through proper contact. Contact affects not just the horse's head and neck, but his entire body:

It is necessary for him to understand you and to respond immediately to your will, and with the true art of riding, you will make him aware that his forehead, that is the strongest part of his body, must go in front, and his weakest part, which is the muzzle, should be placed below. And do not listen to those modern riders that have said the exact opposite, because the more that a horse goes forth with a loose head-set, and with his muzzle pointed outward, the more he will go forth with a yielding and loose (hollow) back in such a way that most times, so that not only will he *manège* in a wide and leaning manner, with no order whatsoever, but he will also more easily lose endurance. But when he places his muzzle below in its proper place, and charges with his forehead, this will strengthen his back bit-by-bit, and will place him on the bit. After rocking back-and-forth upon this hindquarters many times, it will unify all the horse's strength, from which also lightness, greater strength and developed loin muscles will be born in him, and great ease in employing these.⁹¹

Proper head-set and contact allows the horse to 'unify his strength' and strengthen the muscles of the back and loin area (the area between the horse's back and the hindquarters or croup). The end result of contact is collection: the compacting of the frame and muscles that is essential for performing any of the advanced movements of dressage. Without collection, the grace and beauty of dressage would be impossible.

Grisone's detailed discussion of contact and the complexities of finding the right bit for an individual horse anticipates, and in some

⁹⁰ Ibid., fols. 66v–67v.

⁹¹ Ibid., fol. 118v.

cases, surpasses the discussion of contact in later treatises. Perhaps the master who best understood Grisone's theories of contact was John Astley. According to Blundeville, John Astley trained two of his own horses using Grisone's rules, 'without any helpe of any other teacher'. Astley, who devotes a whole section of his treatise to 'the true use of the hand by the said Grysons rules and precepts', held a favourable view of the Italian master. Not only does Astley insert quotations in Italian from Grisone, but he also cites the pages of the 1571 Italian edition on which the references can be found.⁹² His quotation or paraphrasing of specific passages are too numerous to list here but include Grisone's metaphor of the horse governed by the bit to the '*manico del timone*' or, as Astley translates it, 'handle of the stearne [rudder]'.⁹³ His careful reading of the *Ordini* suggests that he had either read the Italian edition himself or had been assisted by Blundeville in translating and analyzing the original work.

Newcastle, who so ferociously rejects the *Ordini*, makes observations about contact quite similar to Grisone's. Just as Grisone objects to loading the mouthpiece of the bit, he tells his rider to put 'as little Iron in your Horse's Mouth as possible you can'.⁹⁴ Both Newcastle and Grisone agree that the Cannon bit, one of the less-severe mouthpieces (similar to the modern jointed snaffle), should be the first bit that the rider tries on the horse.⁹⁵ Newcastle's relation of the length of the bit 'cheeks' or guards (the external pieces of the bit to which the reins are attached) to its force as a lever exerted on the mouth points to a similar passage in Grisone.⁹⁶ De Pluvinel, the student of Grisone's Neapolitan contemporary, Pignatelli, likewise makes statements in his treatise that suggest his familiarity with ideas on contact and biting in the *Ordini*. Like Grisone, he advocates adjusting the length and shape of the bit cheeks or guards according to the carriage of the horse's head and neck and is of the same mind in placing the eye of the bit (to which the headstall is attached) neither too high or too low.⁹⁷ Grisone recommends wrapping the curb chain in fabric if the horse has a deli-

⁹² Astley, *The Art of Riding*, title page.

⁹³ Ibid. 21.

⁹⁴ Cavendish, *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention* 344.

⁹⁵ Grisone, *Gli ordini* fol. 68r; and Cavendish, *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention* 347.

⁹⁶ Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 72r; Cavendish, *A New Method and Extraordinary Invention* 345.

⁹⁷ Grisone, *Gli Ordini* fol. 72r; Pluvinel, *The Maneige Royal* 150.

cate curb groove, not unlike de Pluvinel's recommendation that a progressive series of curb chains, increasing in severity from silk thread to leather to iron, be used to achieve the best *appui*.⁹⁸

Despite the "new" methods of the seventeenth-century riding masters, Grisone devotes more discussion to contact than either Newcastle or de Pluvinel. His sophisticated understanding of how contact works and what can be done to resolve conformational issues is remarkably "modern". While the bits depicted in the *Ordini* appear barbarous to some modern eyes, many were designed to enable the horse to achieve proper contact. William Steinkraus, the Olympic rider, told me that he bought an antique Cannon bit and used it on his own horse, who was extremely responsive and comfortable with it. In a passage of Astley's own treatise reproduced on page 7 of Edwards's and Graham's introductory essay, the English author asserted that the rider accompany the horse in time and measure so that they become one being. Astley's words recall a passage from the first book of the *Ordini*, mentioned earlier in this essay. With art and true discipline, and a pleasant bit upon which to rest his mouth, the horse 'will be fullie brought to all good, and conform himselfe to the will his Rider'.⁹⁹

Conclusion

In viewing a video of Edward Gal and Moorlands Totilas' performance at the World Equestrian Games, I could not help but recall Grisone's words from the *Ordini*, 'Measured and regal, he becomes one with the will of the rider who sits upon him.' Although the modern sport of dressage has evolved and changed since the *Ordini* was first published almost five hundred years ago, it is exciting to recognise that much about riding that seems so familiar – the 20-meter circle, diagrams, and the importance of contact in maintaining balance in the horse – began with the rambling treatise of the Neapolitan master. I hope that the publication of the translation of the *Ordini* will allow both riders and scholars to re-assess, appreciate and draw their own conclusions about the contribution of Federico Grisone to the development of dressage and horsemanship.

⁹⁸ Grisone, *Ordini* fol. 66r; Pluvinel, *The Maneige Royal* 22.

⁹⁹ Astley, *The Art of Riding* 17.

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—, *Ordini Di Cavalcare, Et Modi Di Conoscere le nature de' Caualli, di emendare i lorvitij, & ammaestrargli per l'uso della guerra, & giouamento de gli huomini: Con Varie Figvre Di Morsi, secondo le bocche, & il maneggio che si vuol dar loro Del Federico Grisone, gentil'huomo Napolitano; Di nuouo migliorati, & accresciuti di postille, & di Tauola; aggiungeuisi vna scielta di notabili auuertimenti, per fare eccelenti razze, & per rimediare alle infermita de' Caualli* (Venice, Giovanni Andrea Valuassori detto Guadagnino: 1571).

—, *Degli Ordini di Cavalcare* [1620], ed. M. Gennero, *I classici dell'equitazione I* (Viterbo: 2000).

2. French

—, *L'ecuirie du S. Federic Grison gentilhomme napolitain. En laquelle est monstré l'ordre & l'art de choysir, dompter, piquer, dresser & manier les chevaux, tant pour l'usage de la guerre qu'autre commodité de l'homme. Avec figures de diverses sortes de mors de bride. Nagueres traduite d'italien en françois* (Paris, Charles Perier: 1559).

—, *L'escuirie du S. Federic Grison, gentilhomme napolitain*, B. Du Poy-Monclar de Luc (trans.), ed. P. Franchet d'Espèrey, *Bibliothèque de l'écuyer* (Houilles, France: 2002).

3. Spanish

—, *Ordenes de cabalgar de Fadrique Grison, cavallero napolitano; traducidas de la lengua ytaliana en vulgar castellano*, Mss. Madrid, National Library, 9999 DIAP, 2, Fondo antiguo (ant. 1930 incl.), Sala Cervantes.

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4. German

—, *Des edlen hochberumbten rittermässigen Manns Friderici Grisoni Neapolitanus beschreibung rütterlichen tugennt der Reutterey wahre gerechte ordnungen vnd lehren die Pferdt gerecht inn alle geradigkeit zum Ernnt vnnd Kurtzweill geschickt vnnd volkhomben zumachen durch Josephen Höchstettern uffs ainfelttigest verteutscht*, Manuscript, Michigan State University Library, East Lansing, Michigan, xx Mss. 191.

—, *Marstallordnung der Herzoge von Mantua*, trans. J. Hochstetter J., Manuscript Heidelberg, University of Heidelberg Library, Cod. Pal. German. 232.

—, *Des Edlen Hochberumbten und Rittermessigen Friderici Grisonis Künstliche beschreibung [...] die Pferdt [...] geschickt und vollkommen zumachen. In fünff Bücher [...] und auss Italianischer sprach [...] in unser best teütsch gebracht. Durch Hansen Frölich, und Veyt Tuftt* (Augsburg: Mattheo Francken in Verlegung Hansen Frölich: 1566).

FAYSER JOHANNES, *Hippokomike. Künstlicher Bericht vnd allerzierlichste Beschreybung des edlen, vhesten, vnnd hochberümbten Ehrn Friderici Grisonis Neapolitanischen hochlöblichen Adels : wie die streitbarn Pferdt (durch welche ritterliche Tugendten mehrers thails geübet) zum Ernst vnd ritterlicher Kurtzweil geschickt vnd vollkommen zumachen* (Augsburg, Michael Manger, in Verlegung Georgen Willers: 1570).

—, *Hippokomikē. Künstlicher Bericht Vnd allerzierlichste beschreybung...Friderici Grisonis [...]: Wie die Streitbarn Pferdt [...] zum Ernst vnd Ritterlicher Kurtzweil, geschickt und vollkommen zumachen : In sechs Bücher bester Ordnung*,

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II. HORSE BREEDING

ALTERING A RACE OF JADES: HORSE BREEDING AND GEOHUMORALISM IN SHAKESPEARE

Ian F. MacInnes

As the essays in this volume make clear, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe was a horse-owning, horse-riding culture, a place where the language of horses and horsemanship was pervasive. In the case of England, it was also a place where both the language and culture of the horse were increasingly connected with national identity. Here, for example, is the well-known passage in Shakespeare's *Henry V* where the French Constable wonders how on earth the English army, which is expected lose, has been doing so well:

Dieu de batailles! where have they this mettle?
Is not their climate foggy, raw, and dull,
On whom, as in despite, the sun looks pale,
Killing their fruit with frowns? Can sodden water,
A drench for sur-reined jades, their barley-broth,
Decoct their cold blood to such valiant heat?
And shall our quick blood, spirited with wine,
Seem frosty? O, for honor of our land,
Let us not hang like roping icicles
Upon our houses' thatch, whiles a more frosty people
Sweat drops of gallant youth in our rich fields!¹

Now, nationality and national identity have been acknowledged as one of the main subjects of this play, underlying its production history in cases such as the 1944 movie version starring Laurence Olivier. And the second tetralogy as a whole, with its passages on the 'sceptered isle' and its use of the word 'nation' was once used as a touchstone of patriotic feeling. More recently, critics have disagreed about the nature of the nation being dramatized. Graham Holderness, for example, sees Henry as a purely medieval feudal figure rather than an allegory for

¹ Shakespeare William., *The Life of Henry the Fifth*, in Evans G.B. (ed.), *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: 1974) 3.5.15–25. All future references to the play are from this edition and will be noted by act, scene, and line number in parentheses. See also Flaherty's essay in this collection.

the leader of a new nation state.² Others, like David Cairns and Shaun Richards, continue to insist that the play ‘dramatizes [...] the originating moment of nationhood’.³ From this debate has emerged a sense that the play’s version of nation is contingent (Cohen), fragile (Tosi), or imagined (Womack).⁴ Some critics have begun to call attention to passages like this one to show the extent to which early modern forms of nationhood are rooted in physiology and the environment. Like many depictions of nationality in the period, it invokes climate theory, or, as Floyd-Wilson so aptly names it, ‘geohumoralism’, the belief that regional differences helped determine an individual’s character. She argues that geohumoralism is in fact ‘the authoritative ethnological discourse of the period’⁵ and, as she and others have noted, passages like the one from *Henry V* raise certain difficult climatic questions about the English national character. That these passages also invoke English horses demonstrates the extent to which this animal could serve as a metonymic connection between real agricultural and environmental concerns and the emergent imaginary concept of “nation”.

From the perspective of this volume we might especially note that this passage gives geohumoralism itself an agricultural, and especially an equine, emphasis. When the Constable calls barley-broth the national English diet, he is clearly thinking of English ale. This reputation may be well deserved. If Gregory King’s seventeenth-century estimates are correct, the average consumption of beer and ale in early modern England (for both adults and children) was well over a litre a day.⁶ The barley to make the ale came from English fields and these fields and their products are the main subject of the Constable’s thoughts. He dismisses barley-broth precisely as a purely agricultural instrument:

² Holderness G., *Shakespeare Recycled: The Making of Historical Drama* (New York: 1992) 104.

³ Cairns D. – Richards S., “What Ish My Nation?”, in Ashcroft B. *et al.* (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London: 1995) 178.

⁴ See Cohen D., “History and the Nation in Richard II and Henry IV”, *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 42, 2 (2002) 293–315; Tosi L., “A Map of Dis-Unity: Henry V and the Making of ‘England’”, in Bassi S. – Cimarosti R. (eds.), *Paper bullets of the brain: experiments with Shakespeare* (New York: 2006) 145–166; Womack P., “Imagining Communities: Theatre and the English Nation in the Sixteenth Century”, in Aers D. (ed.), *Culture and History, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing* (New York: 1992) 91–146.

⁵ Floyd-Wilson M., “English Mettle”, in Kern P.G. *et al.* (eds.), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: 2004) 133.

⁶ King G., “Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State & Condition of England (1696)”, in *A reprint of economic tracts* (Baltimore: 1936) 35.

a 'drench for sur-reined jades'. As it happens, barley-broth was indeed the base for several kinds of actual horse drenches, including one for the staggers, in which the reader is urged to take dill, pepper and saffron, 'put them to a pottel of Barley water, and then straine it well through a strayner, and give the Horse a quart thereof to drinke early in the morning'.⁷ Finally, the Constable imagines the English sweating 'drops of gallant youth in our rich fields' as if they are translating some of their own national characteristics to the French pastures. From the first moment of this play when the Chorus tells us that English youths 'sell the pasture now to buy the horse, / Following the mirror of all Christian kings' (2.Chorus.5), we are reminded that the English army is itself constructed from the products of English soil. The irony of the phrase 'selling the pasture to buy the horse' depends on their close association. The English are exchanging their land for the potentially desperate chance to follow their king to new lands. Henry himself famously exhorts his men to show 'the mettle of your pasture' (3.1.27), a metaphor which geohumoralism renders at least partially literal. *Henry V* is also a very horse-centric play and some of the most visible animal products of real English pastures are English horses. Because of their status and appeal to the elite, the nation's horses attracted more commentary than would be strictly warranted by their share in the export trade. English horses were also the products that for a variety of reasons were most vulnerable to the Constable's question. The relationship between English horses and English fields was very much an open question in the early modern period. In what follows, I argue that the ethnological uncertainties of horse breeding and the anxieties about the English environment are coextensive. For the early modern English audience these issues reflected deep-seated ecological concerns as the quality of both horses and pasture became a fundamental part of the national imagination.⁸

There is good evidence that the issues surrounding real horses in England could underpin their deployment in literary works like *Henry V*. As Peter Edwards revealed in *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart*

⁷ Baret Michaell, *Hipponomie or the Vineyard of Horsemanship* (London, George Eld: 1618) appendix 10.

⁸ *Henry V* is not the only literary work to depend in part on this metonymy. Drayton's nationalistic *Poly-Olbion* (1612), for example, which calls the Thames 'great pasture's Prince', relies on a deeply metonymized topography in which domestic animals figure not just as products but as representatives of the land that feeds them.

England, economics and politics conspired to keep horses, and particularly horse breeding, at the forefront of English national interest for a long time. A sustained increase in demand for horses created a kind of perceived ongoing crisis, particularly after Henry VIII's wars depleted the supply of good cavalry horses.⁹ Laws preventing the export of horses were renewed, breeding programmes were constantly encouraged and the value of English horses soared in international circles. Edwards has pointed out that English horses, once thought to be the worst in Europe, were highly respected by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Horse markets became more sophisticated and questions of breed were more prevalent. Horses also appear to have been more ubiquitous in England, even if they were initially thought to be physically inadequate. 'By Continental standards horse ownership was widespread in England', Edwards says, 'and the number of people who rode on horseback was one of the features noted by foreign observers'. What Edwards has described amounts to a revolution in the English horse, a revolution both highly public and perceived as one of national importance. Since national importance was itself a relatively new concept in the early modern period, horses contributed economically to the construction of the idea of "nation". This transformation in the English horse depended almost entirely on changes in production and attention to the horse was by extension attention to the land and its products. As Edwards puts it, 'Because of the vital role that horses played in the social and economic life of Tudor and Stuart England, the means whereby the animals were produced and distributed to those who needed them were matters of great concern to contemporaries'.¹⁰

English pastures and fodder were undergoing a similar economic transformation. Historians have been divided about the exact period of England's agricultural revolution but it seems clear that change was well underway by the end of the sixteenth century. Mark Overton attempts to solve the question by arguing for two periods of revolution, an early one of innovation and a later one of development in farming technology and of social change.¹¹ The sixteenth century

⁹ Edwards P., *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: 1988) 12–13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 6; 140, 143.

¹¹ Overton M., *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500–1850* (Cambridge: 1996) 8.

certainly witnessed a marked demand for agricultural products, as recorded in rising prices. Of course, prices increased everywhere during the century but they did so more rapidly in agriculture. Joan Thirsk's *Agrarian History of England and Wales* records twice as great an increase for agricultural products as for industrial ones between 1500 and 1600.¹² These trends rewarded innovation. As Bowden puts it in his section on agricultural prices in Thirsk's *Agrarian History*, 'Under the stimulus of growing population, rising agricultural prices, and mounting land values, the demand for land became more intense and its use more efficient.'¹³ And English agriculture itself was increasingly animal-based. By 1696, when Gregory King made his attempt at an agricultural census, animals and their feedstock (both from pasture and fodder crops) constituted a majority of agricultural produce and the number of large farm animals exceeded the number of people.¹⁴ Because rights to common land were extensive, even pertaining to all inhabitants in areas of plentiful pasture, animal ownership was widespread, even if it sometimes consisted of a single cow and a couple of sheep.¹⁵ One modern historian argues that the livestock density in England doubled in the first half of the seventeenth century.¹⁶ All of these creatures had to eat and their growing appetite resulted in increasing concern over the productivity of English pasture land and the quality of English hay, oats and other green stuff. Much depended on these, and much more was thought to depend. The issue was not one of arable land versus pasture because arable land and husbandry were so interrelated in English agriculture: 'Improvements in arable and pastoral husbandry went hand in hand, each helping the other, and both serving to promote the specialization and interdependence of regions'.¹⁷ Rather, the response to the increasing demand for pasture, fodder, and other crops is evident in a number of phenomena, ranging from the various projects of land reclamation and technical improvements

¹² Thirsk J. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, IV 1500–1640* (Cambridge: 1967) 609.

¹³ Bowden P., "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits, and Rents", in Thirsk, *Agrarian History IV*, 593.

¹⁴ King Gregory, "Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State & Condition of England (1696)", in *A reprint of economic tracts* (Baltimore: 1936) 35.

¹⁵ Thirsk, *Agrarian History IV*, 185.

¹⁶ Overton, *Agricultural Revolution* 111.

¹⁷ Thirsk, *Agrarian History IV*, 199.

such as Roland Vaughan's famous watermeadows to the outpouring of books dealing with farming methods, and even to the astonishing number of mathematical works devoted to the landscape.¹⁸

Concerns about the pasturing and feeding of many animals might be a pressing issue but it remained a purely domestic one in the case of animals like cows and sheep. However, because the whole system of horse improvement depended on importation and careful breeding, the national interests involved unavoidably bound questions about horse pasture, oats and other horse-fodder to more intangible questions about the origins of racial characteristics. Issues of breeding and of stock are deeply physical and the idea of there being a particular kind of "English horse" raised concerns that were physiological rather than economic. What made a good horse was a matter of constant debate, particularly concerning the role regional differences in climate played in determining the character of a horse. Almost all treatises on horses or riding in the early-modern period begin by describing and comparing the different types of horses, types which were invariably linked to a particular region. Thus, although horse breeds became a subject for deliberate intervention, they began as regional identities. Edward Topsell, whose work as a compiler brought him face to face with this tendency, even goes as far as to assert, 'there are as many kindes of Horses as Nations'. This coequality between horse and nation has been recognized particularly by scholars working on the late seventeenth century like Karen Raber and Richard Nash but it is present from very early on.¹⁹ Thus, we constantly hear about the relative merits of the Neapolitan courser, the Irish hobby and many others. Such descriptions frequently refer to climate as a way to support their claims. To Nicholas Morgan, 'The almain or high Dutch horse', 'being bred in a coole fruitfull climate, rich in pure ayre and wholesome springs, is a horse of wonderfull tall stature and big of bone'.²⁰ The Sardinian horse, Morgan argues, since it is bred in a climate like

¹⁸ Based on the works represented in Taylor E.G.R., *The Mathematical Practitioners of Tudor & Stuart England* (Cambridge: 1954) Survey techniques were second in popularity only to navigation.

¹⁹ Raber K., "A Horse of a Different Color; Nation and Race in Early Modern Horsemanship Treatises", in Raber K. – Tucker T., *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: 2005) 225–244. See also Nash R., "Honest English Breed" in the same volume (245–272).

²⁰ Morgan Nicholas, *The Horse-Mans Honour, or, The Beautie of Horsemanship* (London, Helm and Marriott: 1620) 3.

that of Naples, must resemble the Neapolitan horse.²¹ Morgan does not claim that horses reflect the origins of their progenitors (a modern person would say, for example, that Neapolitan horses reflect a Spanish influence since Naples was part of the empire). Instead, he focuses on local climate. Ostensibly, these descriptions of what we would now call different breeds of horse are designed to help the reader select a horse appropriate for a given task. But they constantly participate in the broader discourse of geohumoralism, reinforcing and giving practical dimension to this way of categorizing nationality. Indeed for a well-bred Englishman in the early seventeenth century, the selection of a horse was the moment at which he would be most reliant on geohumoralism, an otherwise somewhat speculative field. As the Scottish author, John Barclay, says, 'to examine all other climats with the same diligence, were more for the curiosity of pleasure, then the profitable use of commerce or conversation. For who but Merchants goe into Affrick?'²² The relative character of Europeans and Africans might have been of theoretical interest but the nature of a horse one might be about to spend good money on was of pressing immediate concern.

The problem, of course, is that no-one was ever quite sure exactly how and when climate affected a particular horse. What happened when a Neapolitan courser was brought to England? Could a horse change by moving from one climate to another and, if so, how quickly? This was an important question, not just because England imported horses but because the answer would determine the course of any breeding programme. Nicholas Morgan, the same writer who mentions climate so insistently when describing particular breeds of horses, voices exactly this question. He wonders whether certain countries with 'excellent air, water, ground [...] can altar a Race of Jades to good horses, or whether they bee onely good that are there begotten and bredde, and no other'.²³ Although Morgan concludes that neither air, water, nor 'ground' (pasture) can affect the nature of a horse, he is still surprised that England, which he thinks has good air and

²¹ Morgan does display some scepticism about local origin as the only marker of a horse's quality, but as with any dominant discourse, geohumoralism remains his only real avenue for thinking about breed qualities.

²² Barclay John, *The Mirror of Mindes, or Barclay's Icon Animorum* (London, I. Beale: 1631) 61.

²³ Morgan, *The Horse-Mans Honour* 18.

water, had not previously been thought to produce good horses. The quality of English horses is always of great concern to English writers, who tend both to over-generalize and to take as their subject the elite animals in what was surely a fairly motley and slowly changing genetic pool. As time progressed, the dominant sentiment was that the best English horses were just as good as, if not better than, any others and that those who ran after foreign beasts were either being too fashionable or disloyal. Markham considers the English horse to be second only to the Neapolitan courser and Morgan calls English horses, 'beasts of strong and great stature, stout courage and good shape'.²⁴ These writers' attempts both to investigate and to defend the evolving nature of the "English" horse are evidence of a controversy that contributes to the construction of nationality itself. Of course, as Edwards has shown, the best English horses really had improved by the seventeenth century. William Cavendish, the Duke of Newcastle, certainly thought they were satisfactory and his authority far exceeds writers like Morgan and Markham. But, on the other hand, Newcastle praises what he sees as a totally hybrid product: 'Certainly English Horses are the Best Horses in the whole World for All Uses whatsoever, from the Cart to the Mannage; and some are as Beautiful Horses as can be any where, for they are Bred out of all the Horses of all Nations'.²⁵ Newcastle seems secure in the idea that horses will derive their qualities from their "sires" rather than from the climate, but his deliberate refusal to praise a native horse demonstrates the persistence of the controversy. In the end, this controversy had less to do with reality than with the larger anxiety brought on by the metonymic connection between horses and national character: a nation of excellent horses is also perhaps a nation of excellent men. A nation of weak horses, on the other hand, did not bode well for its inhabitants. The debate over the value of the English horse was thus part of a larger concern with the relationship between constant and inevitable climatic influence and attempts to improve a "breed". These concerns tended to move the register of discourse far beyond real horses toward a much more theoretical construct of the "English horse".

The geohumoral connection between horse and nation meant that early modern discussions of English horses extended almost seamlessly

²⁴ Morgan, *The Horse-Mans Honour* 8.

²⁵ Cavendish William, *A new method, and extraordinary invention, to dress horses, and work them according to nature as also, to perfect nature by the subtilty of art, which was never found out* (London, Thomas Milbourn: 1667) 59.

to discussions of English people, since humans and animals shared a humoral constitution. On the whole, animals were just thought to demonstrate the principles of climatic influence more quickly and visibly. James Howell, describing the effect of the Dutch climate, says,

that when people of more vivacious temper, come to mingle with them, at the second generation, they seeme to participate of the soyle and Ayre, and degenerate into meere Hollanders; the like is found dayly in Horses and Dogs, and all other animals.²⁶

The questions for both are frequently the same. Are the English people a 'race of Jades' or not? If they are, in fact, somehow constitutionally defective, can they be altered, and what would it take? Geohumoralism is the source of the connection. It is also both notoriously slippery and so commonplace as sometimes to seem invisible. But the ways in which geohumoralism was deployed, even casually, frequently betray larger uncertainties about the relationship between determinism and agency on a national level. On the one hand, and depending on how the climatic zones were read, England occupied a privileged position. One of the most common features of geohumoralism from classical times into the early modern period is the tendency of various writers to argue that their own countries are "temperate", while all others, north and south, lean to excess in one way or another. Early modern writers were aware of this tendency but their wry admission of it did not prevent them from duplicating it. The anonymous French work translated by Robert Ashley, *A Comparison of the English and Spanish Nation*, argues that when Aristotle says Greece is the most temperate country, 'the love of truth gave place to the love of his countrie'.²⁷ But Ashley's author, who wants the French to ally with the English, ends up claiming that France and England share the perfect climate, the former by virtue of its placement at 45° north latitude, the latter by virtue of the warm water that surrounds it. Reverting to the military implications, as so many works do, this one says that the English are therefore both warlike and wise. On the other hand, the English sometimes perceive of themselves as climatically challenged. Thomas Proctor, an English military theorist, seems to argue in *On the Knowledge and Conduct of Warres* that his climate is perfect but he also seems to

²⁶ Howell James, *Instructions for forreine travell*: 1642; collated with the second edition of 1650, ed. E. Arber (London: 1869) 62.

²⁷ Ashley Robert, *A Comparison of the English and Spanish nation: composed by a French gentleman* (London, John Wolfe: 1589) 33.

feel that English military success requires explanation: 'For what is in want or lett that the Englisheman [...] should not excell other nations in deades & exployctes of Armes [...]? Surely the defectes are, lacke of endeavour, & discipline'.²⁸

These supposed faults betray the fact that England may not be as well situated as many would have it. 'Lacke of endeavour' is a fault of the phlegmatic individual. And England, with its cool, wet and fertile climate, was constantly at risk of being assigned this character in geohumoral debates, although not always directly. John Barclay, who prides himself on his honesty, calls his southern neighbours lazy by reason of the fecundity of their countryside.²⁹ Jean Bodin repeatedly argues that 'a fertile country breeds effeminate people'.³⁰ Although he doesn't refer to England's special fertility, he associates both seacoasts and islands with a dangerous kind of ease of life.

When geohumoralism enters literary works like Shakespeare's *Henry V*, we can see that the fundamental uncertainties about both the nature and the effect of English environment are reflected in a kind of double vision. On the one hand, the play sometimes tries to suggest that the English climate is actually superior. On the other hand, it also suggests that the English succeed *despite* their unfortunate climate. As we might expect, this debate is conducted primarily through references to the bodies of horses, sometimes real, sometimes ideal or imaginary. Ultimately, the contradictory terms by which Shakespeare celebrates English nationality mirror the contradictions of early modern horse texts with regard to breed.

In his most famous passage, the Constable of France begins by insulting the English climate but the very same geohumoral model he uses also operates against his France. According to Levinus Lemnius, whose 1576 book *Touchstone of Complexions* is deeply geohumoralist, the French are not naturally valiant but 'wavering unconstant, captious, deceitful, falsehearted, desirous of alterations and tumultes, babblative, and full of much vaine tattling'.³¹ The most famous scene of vain tattling in the play must be the Dolphin's raptures over his horse. The scene begins with mutual praise of armour and horses but the Dolphin takes his bragging to extremes:

²⁸ Proctor T., *Of the knowledge and conducte of warres* (1578) (New York: 1970) preface iv.

²⁹ Barclay, *The Mirror of Mindes* 106.

³⁰ Bodin J., *The six bookes of a commonweale* (1606) (New York: 1979) 565.

³¹ Lemnius Levinus, *Touchstone of Complexions* (London, Elizabeth Allde: 1576) 20.

DOLPHIN I will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns. Ça, ha! he bounds from the earth, as if his entrails were hairs; *le cheval volant*, the Pegasus, *chez les narines de feu*! When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.

ORLEANS He's of the colour of the nutmeg.

DOLPHIN And of the heat of the ginger. It is a beast for Perseus: he is pure air and fire; and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him, but only in Patient stillness while his rider mounts him: he is indeed a horse; and all other jades you may call beasts (3.7.11–24).

Bruce Boehrer sees this passage, and others like it, as evidence that Shakespeare is devaluing the 'aristocratic culture of the horse',³² but in many ways the caricature is entirely conventional on national grounds, especially given the geohumoral discourse of the times. John Barclay, who begins his *Mirroure of Minds or Icon Animorum* with the premise 'that there is a proper Spirit to every Region, which doth in a manner shape the studies, and manners of the inhabitants' (table of contents), says young Frenchmen are like young wines: extraordinarily bold and rash. They have 'unconstant mindes, and [are] easily carried away with any rumors; sometimes impatient of idlenesse, sometimes of businesse; a foolish ostentation and braging of their lusts . . . and undiscreet scoffings, which spare none'.³³

Geohumoralists also have good things to say about the English, whom Lemnius calls 'of statue comely and proportionable, and of body lustie and well complexioned'.³⁴ When King Henry becomes angry at the French at the beginning of the play, he plays the part of the kind of Englishman that Lemnius thinks is typical: a man who, when he is made angry, is not easily satisfied. And the English think of themselves as constitutionally opposed to vain tattling. At one point Henry is talking to the herald Montjoy and stops himself, saying 'forgive me, God, / that I do brag thus! This your air of France / Hath blown that vice in me. I must repent' (3.6.150–152).

Elsewhere in the play, however, ill opinions of the English climate go unanswered. The French lord, Grandpré, is not far wrong when he

³² Boehrer B., "Shakespeare and the social devaluation of the horse", in Raber K. – Tucker T., (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: 2005) 93–96.

³³ Barclay, *The Mirror of Mindes* 86.

³⁴ Lemnius *Touchstone of Complexions* 18.

describes the English army on the night before battle. 'Big Mars', he says, 'seems bankrupt in their beggar'd host':

The horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
 With torch-staves in their hand; and their poor jades
 Lob down their heads, dropping the hides and hips,
 The gum down-roping from their pale-dead eyes
 And in their pale dull mouths the gimmal bit
 Lies foul with chew'd grass, still and motionless (4.2.45–50).

This collection of alleged symptoms does not suggest that the English forces are simply fatigued or under-supplied, as is hinted at elsewhere in the play. Rather, Grandpré is suggesting that the English horses and men are constitutionally unfit for war. The lowered head, the 'dropping' hips, the gummy eyes, pale mouth and undigested food are frequently attributed in horse texts of the period not to any specific disease or mismanagement but to a faulty constitution. The detail most suggestive of disease, the runny eyes, is almost never mentioned in veterinary treatises.³⁵ To understand the force of the Frenchman's remark we would do better to look at descriptions of ideal horses, like Gervase Markham's of the perfect warhorse:

If you would have a Horse for the Wars, you shall choose him that is of a good tall stature, with a comely lean head, an out-swelling forehead, a large sparkling eye, the white whereof is covered with the eyebrows, and not at all discerned, or if at all, yet the least is best. A small thin ear short and pricking is preferable, but if it be long, well carried and ever moving is tolerable while if dull or hanging, most hateful.³⁶

The quality of a horse's eyes is particularly important. Some authors, like Morgan, believed that one could assess the boldness of a horse simply by looking at its eyes. 'The physiognomy of a horse is more certain [than that of man] for he can not keep secret or conceale as man can [...] a bolde horse has a broad forehead, a great black full eie standing out like an hares eye'.³⁷

Unlike the English horses with their dejected demeanour, the French horses are naturally valiant. 'Hark, how our steeds for present service neigh!' the Constable exclaims. 'Mount them', the Dolphin replies,

³⁵ Only Leonard Mascall in his *First Booke of Cattell* (London, John Wolfe: 1587) mentions the symptom, in connection with a condition he calls 'forspoken'.

³⁶ Markham Gervaise, *The Compleat Horseman* (1607) (Boston: 1975) 33.

³⁷ Morgan, *The Horse-Mans Honour* 65.

'and make incision in their hides, / That their hot blood may spin in English eyes, / And doubt them with superfluous courage' (4.2.9–11). Here 'hot blood' is synonymous with 'superfluous courage' and something that the English do not appear to possess. The eyes which 'faintly through a rusty beaver peep' (the human eyes) or are 'pale-dead' with the 'gum down-roping' (the horses' eyes) are lacking precisely this element of heat and courage. They are almost lacking life itself. Grandpré calls them 'island carrions, desperate of their bones':

Description cannot suit itself in words
To demonstrate the life of such a battle
In life so lifeless as it shows itself (4.2.53–55).

All of this description is part of the French attempt to encourage themselves before the battle but it does accord with many notions of the regional differences between French and English bodies. The English climate is cold and wet; the English themselves, like their horses, should be cold, pale and gummy. Indeed, phlegmatic faults were precisely what military writers like Proctor saw as the greatest problem with English troops.³⁸

In this context, the fact that the English succeed means that they are producing the humorally unexpected. Shakespeare is not the only one to locate this unexpected triumph solely in the person of Henry V. The very passage from Proctor that calls English soldiers phlegmatic praises the 'endeavour' and 'discipline' first of Alexander the Great, by whose abilities tiny Macedonia 'subdued the mightie Monarchie of the Persians', and then of 'the mightie and victorious Alexander of Englande, whose most renoumed battaile of Agincourte, and su[n]dry triumphant conquestes in Fraunce, made the whole worlde to shake'.³⁹ Geohumoral writers like Lemnius always admit that climate can sometimes be overcome by discipline. Northerners may be naturally stupid, he says, but King Eric of Sweden had through his own recent efforts trained his countrymen to 'more civil order' and had 'adorned' their minds:⁴⁰

Education, institution and discipline, altereth the usuall nature, and ordinary conditions of every Region: for we see the common sorte and

³⁸ Whether English soldiers were *actually* 'lacking in endeavour', as Proctor puts it, is an unanswerable question.

³⁹ Proctor, *Knowledge and Conduct of Warres* iv.

⁴⁰ Lemnius, *Touchstone of Complexions* 16.

multitude, in behavior and maners grosse and unnurtured whereas the Nobles and Gentlemen (altering theyr order and diet, and digressing from the comon fashion of their pezantly countrey men) frame themselves and theirs, to a very commendable order, and civill behavior.⁴¹

Henry extends this process from himself to his men, primarily through his powerful public exhortations. In these, he addresses himself constantly to the physical bodies of his subjects. 'Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide', he tells them, 'Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit / To his full height', 'Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood, / Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage' (3.1). In these terms the English victory over the French becomes a triumph of leadership over the unruly body. Given the insistence on climate throughout the play, that unruliness is not accidental or merely human. It is the English climate at work.

The discourse of early modern horsemanship had a remarkably similar answer to the particularly English question about what makes a Jade (or conversely what makes a good horse). As Michael Baret puts it, in his *Hipponomie or the Vineyard of Horsemanship*, 'some have made Jades of them that have beene both very beautiful, and also as well bread as could be wished'.⁴² For him, Jades are made, not born. Appearance (things like colour and conformation) and breeding are not determining. Rather, he thinks horses' bodies always need refashioning through disciplined intervention. Good horsemen must have 'the true facility of hand and body to helpe with the agility of their body the unaptnesse of the Horses body'.⁴³ Such arguments did not make questions about the value of the 'English horse' less urgent but they did relocate the concerns from breeding to training. National character, in horses and perhaps in people, was sometimes a matter of will and judgment. Baret's opinions were still in the minority, however. The debate over the source of breed characteristics is never fully resolved in the early modern period. Its resistance, and even its persistence, testifies to the way that that intangible and often literary questions of national identity were constantly implicated in physiological discourse about human and animal breeds.

⁴¹ Lemnius, *Touchstone of Complexions* 18.

⁴² Baret, *Hipponomie* 11.

⁴³ Baret, *Hipponomie* 8.

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“BEWARE A BASTARD BREED”:
NOTES TOWARDS A REVISIONIST HISTORY
OF THE THOROUGHBRED RACEHORSE

Richard Nash

Thoroughbred horse racing is famously known as ‘the sport of kings’ and just as famously is tied to a strictly recorded genetic heritage, whereby all horses racing today trace back in patrilineal descent to one of three so-called ‘foundation sires’.¹ The story I am telling here (I hope a better story) challenges that received history in several ways, both narrowly with respect to the origins of the Byerley Turk (the earliest of the foundation stallions) and also more generally in suggesting that the sport’s early history may have been grounded in rebellion as well as in Royalism. It is a story that not only challenges a long-standing myth of origins about the animal we know as the thoroughbred horse, but one that prompts us to reconsider that animal and the sport of horse racing as deeply implicated in the national politics of late Restoration England, when issues of church and state, Protestant and Catholic, and Royalist and Republican were bitterly contested. And it is a story that illustrates some of the ways in which those issues of national politics emerge from a web of kinship networks and regional affiliations. In many ways, it is a story that reconstructs our understanding of Restoration England, less as a moment of restored stability and more as a moment of contested and divided loyalties.

Such reconstruction begins not *ex nihilo* but with a restored, patched-together antique that we have inherited: in this case, the story of the Byerley Turk. The horse we inherit has two stories, very much

¹ While any errors in what follows are, of course, entirely my own, I have received an extraordinary amount of assistance in facilitating the research that has gone into this essay. In addition to those obligations cited in subsequent notes, and at the risk of overlooking some others, I want to express my gratitude to: the remarkably helpful staff of North Yorkshire County Record Office in Northallerton, Yorks; my incredibly valued colleagues at the Old Bald Peg Pedigree Research Group at Bloodlines.net; and, especially, to Clare and Mark Oglesby of Goldsborough Hall, who were both extraordinarily gracious and enormously helpful. Whatever weaknesses remain in this argument, it is now better than it would have been without their help.



Fig. 1. The Byerley Turk. Permission to reprint the Fores Gallery portrait of the Byerley Turk from the owner.

like a repaired antique, which we might identify by the two variant spellings (Byerly and Byerley) with the modern restoration papering over the earlier version. In the first (and subsequent) volume of *The General Stud Book* this animal was identified as 'the Byerly Turk' (without the second 'e') and, following the information that Cheny recorded in his *Historical List* in 1743 and frequently repeated in other places, he was identified only as having been 'Captain Byerly's charger in King William's wars'.² Early in the twentieth century, C.M. Prior 'corrected' *The General Stud Book's* 'misspelling' of Byerley's name, while corroborating his service in William's Irish campaign and adding the information that Byerley had been able to outrun an ambush on his horse while reconnoitering immediately before the Battle of the Boyne.³ He also offered the unsupported speculation that Byerley had

² Cheny John, *An Historical List of All Horse-Matches Run* (London: 1743) 304.

³ Prior C.M., *Early Records of the Thoroughbred Horse* (London: 1924) 143.

captured the horse at the siege of Buda in 1687, although he had been unable to find any record of Byerley's service there:

it has been conjectured that Captain Byerley had returned with his horse from a campaign in the East, in the same way as the Lister Turk was brought home from the siege of Buda in 1687 by the Duke of Berwick, shewing Englishmen were engaged at the time in the struggle in Hungary against the Turks, and these horses were the spoils of war.⁴

As so often happens, once Prior's conjecture appeared in print, the new cleaned-up version quickly replaced the old misspelled version: Byerley's name was restored, the detail of the Battle of the Boyne was added and 'Byerley's Turk' was now clearly and confidently identified as the spoils of war, taken by Byerley at the siege of Buda.

We might want to pause for a moment to reflect on the importance of those moments in which history is written and repaired, as well as the moments in which it takes place. As we will see, during the lifetime of this animal there was precious little awareness of his historical importance – indeed, for the importance of any individual horse, though owners of racehorses were beginning to keep better stud records. At this time, neither Byerley nor any of the people about him could have had anything more than the vaguest glimmer of the very idea of something that might be called 'thoroughbred', much less the figurative power that this idea might come to carry for English culture. At that moment, the primary interest in eastern bloodlines would have been to 're-invigorate' the native blood of the cooler English climate, and the very notion of distinct breed identities – much less, the idea of carefully policing the boundaries of such breed identities – remained an idea not yet imagined. By the middle of the eighteenth century, as horse racing was beginning to achieve a greater cultural significance and as the success of his progeny became more widely noted, the specific details of his exotic otherness and his essential Englishness were systematically attached to accounts of this animal's life and career.⁵ Byerley's military service on behalf of William quickly took on added meaning, when Cheny's account (first appearing in 1743, and repeated annually afterwards) was rapidly followed by the final, failed Jacobite

⁴ Ibid. 143.

⁵ For an instance of recent work on a developing sense of 'Englishness' in the eighteenth century, with special reference to the importation of eastern bloodstock, see Landry D., *Noble Brutes: How Eastern Horses Transformed English Culture* (Baltimore: 2008).

rebellion of 1745. As we will see, the careers of the foundation stallions and their cultural value directly correspond to the years of Jacobite anxiety, between the accession of William and Mary and the failure of the '45. But it was only in the early years of the nineteenth century, after the appearance of *The General Stud Book* and the corresponding shift that this text enabled, that three individuals – the Byerly [sic] Turk, the Darley Arabian and the Godolphin Barb [sic] – could be identified as 'foundation sires', that is, progenitors to whom all major 'Classic' winners could trace in direct tail-male ancestry. For a few years, indeed, a fourth sire, the Alcock Arabian, was represented by a single classic winner, Aimwell, but then his sire line (of patrilineal descent) died out. By this time, England had not only consolidated its protestant Hanoverian succession but had launched on its grand imperial project that would (perhaps only coincidentally) weave a strong cable from those three strands so well-represented by the conjunction of the human/equine hybrid careers of Byerley, Darley and Godolphin: military, merchant, and diplomatic. When Prior wrote in 1924, in that early twentieth-century period between the wars, when, of course, no awareness of 'betweenness' was possible, and when England was seeking to contain the 'troubles' in Ireland, how could he and his readers not be confident that the horse, who figured in the protestant victories of the House of Orange in Ireland, was himself properly the spoils of a successful English intervention in a prior European conflict? For whatever reasons, Prior's version has enjoyed near universal acceptance. Indeed, when Jeremy James recently set out to write his historical novel, *The Byerley Turk: The True Story of the First Thoroughbred* (2005), he took upon himself the labour of combing the archives for any mention of the animal or of Robert Byerley at Buda. He not only found no record of the horse, he also pieced together the records of Byerley's complete military career, records that make clear that Byerley's only military service outside England came in the Irish campaign of 1689–90. Such is the power of received narrative, however, that James adapted his narrative to the now-entrenched conjecture offered by Prior and, without any documentary justification, hypothesized that the horse had been captured at Buda and sold to Byerley as soon as he arrived in England. The well-documented story of the importation of the less-significant Lister Turk from the siege at Buda had provided the basis for Prior's speculation and that speculation offered a more certain (and consequently more satisfying) origin; over the last century it has come to be accepted as fact.

It is, of course, possible that something like James's conjecture of Byerley privately acquiring a spoil of foreign war happened but there is no record of it; and it is certainly not necessary for history, however convenient it was for James's fiction. What we are thrown back on, then, is that the earliest lasting influence (in tail mail descent) on what comes to be established during the eighteenth century as the thoroughbred is the stallion identified by Cheny in 1743 in the following words, written when he presented his first attempt at establishing the pedigrees of all horses then prominent on the turf:

I have been informed by a person of rank and great honour, that the horse called by Sportsmen, the Byerley Turk [...] Was in fact, an Arabian. He was Captain Byerley's Charging Horse in Ireland in the time of King Williams Wars, and afterward proved a very excellent stallion.⁶

The following year, Cheny silently dropped the information from 'a person of rank and great honour' that the horse was an Arabian and he has been 'Byerley's Turk' ever since – though 'Byerley's Charging Horse' appears to be all that there is warrant for. While 'Turk', 'Barb' and 'Arabian' have come to designate distinct breed categories, that concept of 'breed' was still very much in formation in this period. These terms were frequently employed in the sense of nation of origin, in keeping with geohumoral theories of breeding that identified blood from 'hot' southern climates in contradistinction to 'cold' northern blood. Not only do instances exist of horses being alternately designated 'Turk' and 'Arabian', as Cheny's sentence suggests, but there are also instances where such appellations are applied to horses foaled in England of imported parentage. Thus, for example, pedigree records seem to indicate that the horse known as 'Dodsworth' was also known under the name of the 'Darcy Yellow Turk'.⁷ If Byerley never participated in the siege at Buda, and we have no evidence of him acquiring a horse taken there, is there any alternative narrative that we can plausibly substitute for the romantic tale of which James is only the most recent re-teller? What I am going to suggest in this essay is an alternative story, every bit as romantic in its own way but also one

⁶ Cheny, *Horse-Matches* viii.

⁷ In the account book of Richard Newdigate referenced below, we find him in an entry for 1690 mentioning both 'Old Turk' and 'Young Turk'. The following year, an entry, which from the age given clearly indicates the 'Old Turk', identifies the animal as 'Dervise' and describes him as 'a naturall Turk', a phrase generally applied to animals of entirely foreign extraction.

more interestingly implicated in both the origins of modern racing and modern politics; and most importantly, one for which there seems more supporting evidence. It is a tale with more than a few twists and turns, one that requires us to skip back and forth across the shifting political terrain that defined England in the dozen years between the Popish Plot and the coronation of William and Mary. Think of it as a melodrama in three acts: Kinship Networks, Topographical Affiliations and National Politics.

Kinship Networks

Byerley's Charger (1690)

What we are taken back to is that the horse was 'Byerley's Charging Horse in Ireland at the time of King William's wars' and the fact that Byerley participated in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Beyond that, however, we can quickly advance in promising ways. In 1685, James II had granted a charter for a 'Corporation of Horse Breeders in the County of Down', enabling it to establish a racecourse and create racing as a stimulus for the breeding of better horses. Similar charters had previously been granted by his brother, Charles, and the rationale for such events was to improve the quality of cavalry mounts by encouraging the breeding of horses which combined speed and stamina. The first race at Downroyal, however, was not run until March 1690, when it is recorded that Col. Heyford's Barb won the plate, defeating Major Frederick Hamilton's Cob and Captain Byerley's Turk.⁸ A horse foaled in the spring of 1685 would be just 'rising five' in the spring of 1689/90, the normal time in that era, when a horse embarked on his racing or military career. As the author of the *Gentleman's Compleat Jockey* (1715 edition) stated, 'they are fit for the saddle at four years of age, for the wars at six, for the race at eight, for hunting and extream matches at ten or eleven'.⁹ The most prestigious plate races were the Royal Plates for horses aged six years old, carrying twelve stone in four miles heats, with victories in two heats required to win the Plate.¹⁰ There are records in the *Racing Calendars*, which

⁸ Wilson A., *Saint Patrick's Town* (Downpatrick: 1995) 109.

⁹ S.A., *The Gentleman's Compleat Jockey* (London: 1715) 5–6.

¹⁰ Cheny, *passim*.

began to appear annually from Cheny from 1727 onwards, of some horses racing in heats at the age of five, with a very few exceptional instances recorded of horses starting to race late in their fifth year. While Cheny's Calendars were the first accounts published annually, scattered earlier records from the Restoration onwards are consistent on these points. Can we account for a horse in Byerley's possession being foaled between 1680 and the spring of 1685?

Mary Wharton's Abduction (1690)

I believe we can, in fact, establish such a connection by paying attention to a well-known story that has seldom been properly connected with Byerley's life. Almost exactly two years after the Battle of the Boyne, Byerley resigned his military commission, married Mary Wharton and took up his career in Parliament. It has long been known that Mary Wharton had been involved in one of the major scandals of the day just a few months after Byerley's victory at the Boyne. In a footnote to his final chapter, James alludes to it in passing, correctly identifying Mary as 'Robert Byerley's cousin, who later became Byerley's wife', but misconstruing some significant particulars.¹¹

Mary Wharton was at the time only thirteen years old and an orphan, who had been entrusted to the guardianship of Anne Byerley, Robert's mother. Returning home after an evening dinner party in London, her coach was overtaken by another one, and three men abducted Mary and drove her away. In the days that followed, her relations searched for her, even getting the unprecedented action of a Royal Proclamation issued, offering a reward for her return. The proclamation succeeded, for Mary was rescued after an informant told the families where she was being held. One of those involved in her capture, Sir John Johnston, bart., was taken into custody. Subsequent testimony revealed that in the interim the notorious Parson Clewer had married her (apparently not against her will) to the Honorable James Campbell of Burnbank, the fourth son of the 9th Earl of Argyll. At the time, clandestine marriage was not illegal, had been performed quite recently in England (Lord Rochester's marriage is one Restoration instance among several) and was still fairly

¹¹ James J., *The Byerley Turk: The True Story of the First Thoroughbred* (Ludlow: 2005) 354.

commonplace in Campbell's Scotland. In practice, such clandestine marriages connived at marriage by abduction, as the plot of *Clarissa* and other novels of sentiment attest. Although Parliament was at the time refusing to consider a bill outlawing such marriages, and did not in fact ban the custom until the nineteenth century, her relations went considerably further in prosecuting the event. Although Campbell had escaped to Scotland and was never held accountable for his action, Sir John Johnston was made a scapegoat and was executed at Tyburn for his role in the affair. While no law existed explicitly prohibiting clandestine marriage, Johnston was tried, convicted and executed for his part in the 'forcible abduction' that allegedly preceded the marriage. Testimony was presented that force was not used and that the bride was in good humour throughout the event, but a guilty verdict was obtained. Moreover, in an unprecedented development, the family quickly managed to persuade Parliament to pass a private act annulling the marriage to Campbell; Royal Assent to the act was granted on 20 December 1690.¹²

When we begin to examine more closely the story of Mary Wharton's abduction, and particularly when we trace the kinship network in which she is located, we can suggest an alternative origin story for the Byerley Turk. It is one that locates him as perhaps foaled in England, rather than imported, and one that quite possibly places not only this particular animal but also the other humans and horses affiliated with him in a network of protestant rebellion and the emergence of modern political campaigning that marked the divisive end of the reign of Charles II.

The Orphan's Estate (c. 1685)

Mary Wharton was not, as is commonly asserted, the daughter of Philip, Lord Wharton; she was the daughter of his little-known eponymous nephew. Lord Wharton was a wealthy mine-owner, one of the wealthiest men in England, a zealous protestant, who had served as a Parliamentarian during the Interregnum and who was noted for his attempts at political manoeuvring after the Restoration. He was dogged in his opposition to the prospect of the Catholic James ascending

¹² 1690 (2 Will. & Mar. sess. 2) c. 9P.

the throne and, having spent some time in the Tower for his indirect criticism of Charles II in the seventies, he fled England, fearing reprisals from James when that monarch ascended the throne. In Europe, he developed his connections with the court of William of Orange and returned at the time of the revolution. Lord Wharton was always a zealous, yet remarkably circumspect, Whig, advocating some of the more extreme sentiments indirectly but notoriously careful to leave himself escape routes from possible reprisals. Much of his vast wealth was invested in his lucrative mining interests and in many of these he was partnered by his younger brother, Sir Thomas Wharton, KB, of Edlington.

While Lord Wharton was drawn to the public stage, his brother preferred to keep some distance from it, but in a quieter vein he amassed a significant fortune of his own. Sir Thomas had one son and heir, Philip, who married Elizabeth (?) Hutton, the daughter and heiress of Sir Richard Hutton of Goldsborough.¹³ In 1677, Mary was born; the parish registers are incomplete and record no birth, but one is recorded on 14 February 1676/77 in the bishop's transcripts for the parish. In February 1684/85, the day after Mary's eighth birthday, her father, Philip, aged 32, fell ill with what proved to be smallpox. In just over a week, on 23 February, he died, leaving her the richest orphan in England.¹⁴

Settling the estate was complicated, because of the rather unusual circumstances involved. In the autumn of 1684 Philip had remarried, wedding a beautiful young French woman, Angelica Magdalena Pelissary, daughter of the recently deceased treasurer of the French Navy. The elaborate marriage settlement negotiated that October preserved intact for Mary that property, which had entered the family through her mother's marriage to Philip, settled various annuities on Angelica

¹³ Of this lady, it is extremely difficult to find any record, and documents conflict as to whether her name were Elizabeth or Mary. She was the daughter of Richard Hutton, esq. Philip Wharton's will mentions his first wife, "Mary." His marriage settlement prior to his second marriage to Angelica Magdalena Pelissary, however, identifies her as Elizabeth. As the will was written during his final illness shortly before his death, I suspect that the "Mary" may have been a confusion of names with his daughter. Whatever the name of his first wife, I have been unable to identify any record of her death, which must have occurred prior to 1684, perhaps as early as Mary's birth in 1677.

¹⁴ Ashcroft M.Y., *Documents relating to the Swaledale Estates of Lord Wharton in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Northallerton: 1984) 214.

Magdalena for life in return for her dowry and then assigned the bulk of the properties to be evenly divided between Mary and any heirs produced by Angelica Magdalena.¹⁵ Shortly after Philip's second marriage, his father, Sir Thomas, died, leaving a maintenance for his widow but naming Philip as his sole heir. That will had not yet been proved at the time of Philip's death. Sir Thomas had named his brother, Lord Wharton, as executor of his will, while Philip had named his new wife, Angelica, as executrix of his. Some legalities ensued between the two widows and Mary but the upshot was that almost the entirety of both Wharton estates, father and son, devolved on the eight year old and the guardian appointed by Philip's will.

Philip had entrusted Mary's care to the guardianship of her mother's aunt.¹⁶ Anne Hutton, Elizabeth's aunt, had married Anthony Byerley of Middridge Grange, who had died in 1667. At the time of Philip's death, Anne Byerley had two surviving adult sons, Robert, the elder, in military service, and Hutton, the younger, who was a lawyer in the Middle Temple.¹⁷ As more than one contemporary noted at the time, Mary was 'designed' for one of the two sons. Lord Wharton deputized his longtime steward and friend, Philip Swale of Hartforth, to oversee the details of settling his nephew's affairs, and the correspondence between these two in the ensuing months is rich in detail, much of it mind-numbing:

That part of your said letter of the 21st [April 1685] which concern'd the smelting mill of my niece Mary I sent a copy of it on Saturday to be communicated to Mr Byerly [sic] who is the guardian of my niece; but my friend that carried it return'd yesterday & had not the opportunity of delivering it. I intend to send it to her by the first safe opportunity, which happens very frequently, almost daily, & until you hear from her, I suppose you may proceed therein as you intended. Her 2d son

¹⁵ Ashcroft, *Swaledale Estates* 204–205.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 214.

¹⁷ It is the second son, Hutton, who, when Mary is abducted in 1690, takes the lead in her recovery. It was he who manages to obtain the Royal Proclamation, which, offering the reward for information about her whereabouts, led to her recapture and the execution of John Johnston for his part in the abduction. He then sets in motion the process that leads to a Private Act of Parliament annulling the marriage to Campbell, even though it is clear from the testimony that Mary had consented to the marriage and marriage by abduction was still legal. Indeed, his involvement probably led to his death in a duel five years after Mary's abduction. He was buried in the chapel of the Inner Temple. A Latin plaque erected in his memory on the east wall of the church was destroyed during the bombing of London during World War II.

Mr Hutton Bierly is gon into the North & I suppose ere long you will hear of him at Gilling Wood or at Hartford, & will acquaint him there-with & with what else he shall desire you that concerns my niece Mary. He is in trust as I take it by Mrs Bierly in my neece Mary's affairs, & is to have Goldsborough &c. in case of my niece's death without issue, & is bred up to the law & accordingly has good confidence of himself on both accounts.¹⁸ You need not mention to him any thing of any other parts of my letter.

Topographical Affiliations

"Cosin Wilkinson" (1685)

Robert Byerley had inherited the family estate at Middridge Grange on the death of his father, Anthony Byerley. As a result, it has long been accepted by historians that this was the home of Byerley and his Turk until his marriage to Mary Wharton in 1692 brought him into possession of Goldsborough Hall. In fact, the kinship network that united the Whartons and Byerleys was only reaffirmed by that marriage, after successfully annulling the earlier marriage to Campbell. For all practical purposes, Robert Byerley had been in charge of Goldsborough and all Mary's property, including horses, for the seven years in which she had been his ward before the marriage.

As important as this kinship network is, it is reinforced by other supporting kinship networks that sustained and were in turn sustained by regional topographical affiliations. Prior noted that virtually all of the 78 earliest broodmares identified in the *General Stud Book* resided in the relatively small geographical area known as the Vale of York, north of Richmond and south of the River Tees that separates Yorkshire from Durham.¹⁹ If, in fact, the horse, who came to be known as the Byerley Turk, were bred in England rather than imported from overseas, this would be the most likely region in which to place his

¹⁸ Interestingly, Philip Wharton's will corroborates this point, naming Hutton – not Robert – as the cousin in line of inheritance. While this is consistent with Hutton's involvement both in settling the estate and pursuing Mary's abductors (which, as legal matters, would be his understandable concern in any case), it raises the interesting question of why it is Robert, and not Hutton, who eventually marries her.

¹⁹ Prior C.M., *The History of the Racing Calendar and Stud Book* (London: 1926) 80.

birth and upbringing.²⁰ In the correspondence between Lord Wharton and Philip Swale in the months following the death of Mary's father we come across a reference to an excellent candidate to be 'Captain Byerley's charger'. His first appearance is in a letter dated 13 March 1684/85 from Philip Swale:

My Cosin Wilkinson of Borrowbridge writes something to me about some horses Philip Wharton Esquire had of him, which he sayeth is not payed for. I cannot at present write what they came too, but he ads that he shall be content either to take the money or his horse or mare again, for I have not his letter bye me, being left with Peter Hammond on another occasion.²¹

In May, having retrieved the letter from Wilkinson, Swale writes again:

My cosin Wilkinson writes me from Borrowbridge, March 6th 1684/85, Mr. Philip Wharton is owing to me for one mare, a fole and a colt, fiteene pounds, which I did expect to have received ere this, and he desires me to get it into my hand. I know not what answer to give him, or how to advise him, yet could be glad the executors understood it, or those that act for her.²²

For over a year the correspondence continues, involving numerous complex agreements, with difficulties collecting rents, making payments and so on. Yet, a year later Swale, while itemizing accounts of revenues eventually successfully collected from properties in Ravensworth and Hartford, concludes with this line: 'Whereupon there rests in my hand attending her order which I hoped a part would have beene for Cosin Wilkinson £23 7s. 2d.'²³

This portion of the correspondence would seem to indicate that Philip Wharton contracted with 'Wilkinson of Borrowbridge' to purchase a 'mare, a fole and a colt'. There are at least two ambiguities in this transaction. The phrase 'one mare, a fole and a colt' could refer

²⁰ Particularly in the last decades of the seventeenth – and the first decades of the eighteenth – century, most of the important studs were located in this northern region within about a fifteen mile radius from one another. At the heart of that region was the area immediately north of Richmond, where Gatherley Moor (one of the earliest known sites of organized racing) is located. Near there, at Sedbury, James Darcy, as Master of the Royal stud, bred horses from the Royal Mares, identified as the source of many Thoroughbred families. On page 215 of this essay, I have included a map of this region [fig. 3], locating the places mentioned in the text, together with sites of other studs and horse racing venues.

²¹ Ashcroft, *Swaledale Estates* 230.

²² Ibid. 238.

²³ Ibid. 269.

to two horses or to three, depending on whether the 'fole and a colt' is read as a colt foal delivered prior to the 6 March letter or whether Wharton acquired the mare in foal with a colt nursing, and had not yet paid (perhaps awaiting the arrival of the foal in the spring of 1685). This latter reading seems the more likely, as it would be very unusual for a mare to foal before April, much less before early March. Similarly, while we know that Wilkinson has not yet been paid (for horses Wharton has already acquired), it is unclear whether the bill is being tendered in early March because the mare has now foaled or simply because Wharton has recently died. Again, the latter seems more plausible for the same reason as before. At the very least we have Wharton dying possessed of a broodmare and either one colt foal of 1685 or two foals – of 1684 and 1685 – of whom at least one is a colt. Wharton's death, occurring before payment had been made, leads to the remarkably protracted settlement, but in the end Wilkinson seems to receive payment. This would make a colt foaled in the spring of 1684 or 1685 part of the Mary Wharton estate for which Byerley was guardian. I am inclined to believe that there was a foal *in utero* and a colt foal of 1684 and that such a colt would be the right age to be a charger for Byerley in the 1690 campaign. So, we have found a possible route of acquisition for Byerley's charger. While that possibility is not a certainty, and a colt of the right age to be Byerley's Turk in the possession of Byerley, does not preclude other possible acquisitions, we at least know that this is a horse Byerley had access to, and control over. So, how good was Wilkinson's stud?

Captain Wilkinson (1685–92)

The connections that bring this horse to Byerley are worth commenting on. 'Cosin Wilkinson of Borrowbridge' is Andrew Wilkinson of Boroughbridge. His nephew, also Andrew Wilkinson of Boroughbridge, will become an extremely important breeder of thoroughbreds, who will marry the female descendant and heir of the Darcy family of Sedbury. Darcy had acquired (probably during the Interregnum) a number of 'Royal Mares' and served as stud master to Charles II, supplying him with the earliest of what we now think of as thoroughbreds. The earlier of the two Andrew Wilkinsons, identified by Swale as 'cosin Wilkinson of Borrowbridge' in 1685, leases property at Kirkby Ravensworth (frequently called Kirkby Hill or Kirby Hill), near Hartforth, north of Richmond. The *Diary of Dr. Thomas Cartwright, Bishop of Chester*, records that Wilkinson was leasing Kirkby Ravensworth

in January 1687.²⁴ That property lay adjacent to Ravensworth Park, which, at 200 acres, comprised the single largest landholding in the manor of Ravensworth that Sir Thomas and Philip Wharton were leasing out in 1685. The document drawn up by Philip Swale in settling the estate identifies the Park as being leased to 'Capt. Fran. Wilkinson', whom he describes as 'a good tenant'.²⁵ The village of West Layton at that time began quite literally across the road from Ravensworth Park, making it virtually certain that this 'Capt. Fran. Wilkinson' (quite possibly a kinsman of Andrew Wilkinson) was the individual identified in early thoroughbred pedigrees as 'that excellent Breeder Mr Francis Wilkinson of West Laten in Yorkshire'.²⁶

It may be particularly relevant to consider here the detailed account book of Sir Richard Newdigate, dated 1692, transcribed as an appendix to Peter Edwards's book, *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (1988).²⁷ That account book begins by invoking Captain Wilkinson as an authority on valuing horses and his first list deals with Captain Wilkinson's mares.

1691 3 Aug. Least my Wife Son or Relations should think I overprize my Horses, I will set down the Names & Prizes of Captain Wilkinsons Mares as I had them from his own Mouth, & because I would not go to his prize I lost my labor, only bought one little Mare & Foal the very worst he had which cost me 20 Guineas but the mare had 2 great bone spavins yet I sold the Colt to his son for £60 at four year old & I would fain have had one of his mares of his own breed for forty pounds [which that I bought was not] & of forty mares which he had [& owned that he had too many] he would not take under fifty pounds for any one.²⁸

There are several points worth noting in the account book, not the least of which is the difficulty in matching up how many horses Newdigate

²⁴ Cartwright T., *The Diary of Dr. Thomas Cartwright, Bishop of Chester* (London: 1843) 25.

²⁵ Ashcroft, *Swaledale Estates* 263.

²⁶ While I have been unable to confirm a blood relationship between the Wilkinson family of West Layton and the Wilkinson family of Boroughbridge, it is not an entirely unwarranted speculation: while the shared surname is a common one, it is noteworthy that both families were noted for horse breeding, that they lease land adjacent to one another, that both had commercial dealings with Philip Wharton and perhaps most importantly that the two Wilkinson families each appear from virtual obscurity in their respective communities as influential landowners at the same time, by purchasing compounded estates during the Interregnum.

²⁷ Edwards P., *The Horse Trade of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: 1988) 149–153.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 149.

acquired from Captain Wilkinson, and at what prices. That opening paragraph makes it appear as though he refused to pay Wilkinson's asking price and therefore only wound up purchasing 'one little mare & foal'. It is also not clear if the price then given ('the very worst he had which cost me 20 guineas') is meant to indicate mare and foal together (quite close to the Wharton price from six years earlier) or to the foal alone, though it certainly looks like the price for both together. But the reference to the '2 great bone spavins' makes it seem as though the little mare is the one subsequently entered as 'Tempest bloud bay 2 bone spavins'. This mare died between August 1690 and August 1691, when Newdigate updates his accounts, but in spite of how little he valued her in Wilkinson's possession he had noted her down in his own possession as valued at 50 pounds.²⁹ The account record that follows both clarifies and complicates that question, as it lists among his surviving mares:

| Age | Name | Color | Kind/Sex | Price | Number |
|-----|---------------|---|----------|-------|--------|
| 18 | Eidalme | A White | Mare | £50 | 1 |
| 6 | Posthuma | Bright bay with a blaze | Mare | 50 | 2 |
| 6 | Foenick | Dapple Grey | Mare | 60 | 3 |
| 9 | Laiton | Black large with white feet | Mare | 110 | 4 |
| 6 | Arabian | Grey partly strawberry with black Mane & Tail | Mare | 50 | 5 |
| 3 | Young Omphale | A fine Grey inclining to Strawberry | Filly | 30 | 6 |
| 3 | Neapolitan | A Dapple Grey | Filly | 20 | 7 |
| 9 | Hollow back | Grey little | Mare | 15 | 8 |
| 8 | Dusty | Grey stout | Mare | 12 | 9 |

All these but Laiton & Arab are of my own Breed & those I bought of Captain Wilkinson for the prizes set against them.³⁰

The punctuation is a bit of a challenge, but if 'those' refers to the aforementioned Laiton and Arab, it would seem that Newdigate purchased

²⁹ Ibid. 149, 151.

³⁰ Ibid. 150.

more than just 'one little mare and foal [for] 20 guineas'. Indeed, number 5 among the subsequent list of 'stoned horses' appears to be the colt purchased with the little mare and sold back 'for £60 at four year old':

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|--|----|---|
| 5 | 4 | Wilkinson | Chestnut with a Star & 2 white feet | 60 | Captain Wilkinson of Laiton got by the Turk ³¹ |
|---|---|-----------|--|----|---|

It is possible that Newdigate believed that the Andrew Wilkinson of Boroughbridge, who by 1691 leased land adjacent to that of Captain Wilkinson of West Layton, was the son of the elder Wilkinson. It is certainly possible that Newdigate under-records how many horses he acquired from Captain Wilkinson and/or that he overvalues the horses in his possession and/or that he misrepresents the price for which he acquired them. Such discrepancies in memory and recording are not without precedent in the history of horse-trading and, given the attitude expressed by Newdigate's family, he had every reason to minimize his accounting of expense and exaggerate his own valuations. It is certainly the case that Newdigate's records indicate that Captain Wilkinson was an important horse breeder of the period, a view corroborated by subsequent advertisements. And it is just as certainly worth noting that Newdigate's inventory includes, immediately below the entry for the spavined Tempest, an entry for one 'Bierly'.

Lord Arlington's Mare (c. 1674)

One of the earliest taproot mares of the thoroughbred is the matriarch of family 43, a mare known as 'Lord Arlington's Natural Barb Mare'. While Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington, was Secretary of State for Charles II, he was given a mare by the emperor of Morocco. We don't know exactly when but sometime apparently shortly before his death in 1685 Lord Arlington sold this mare to 'Mr. Wilkinson of Boroughbridge'. From that mare, Wilkinson produced a filly, Wilkinson's Bay Arabian Mare. We know that Lord Arlington had been driven from the cabinet by 1674 so any mare he had been given would now be of advancing years as a broodmare. A thoroughly reasonable supposition might be that Wilkinson got a filly out of her and saw the opportunity

³¹ Ibid. 151.

to breed her back and sell her with foal, knowing that her days as a broodmare were numbered and that he had a daughter by her already. I suspect that this may be the mare, whom Wharton acquired, and that the resulting foal was Byerley's Turk. In considering that possibility, we might return to the entry in Newdigate's account book:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|---------------------|----|----------------------|
| 5 | 4 | Wilkinson | Chestnut with a | 60 | Captain Wilkinson |
| | | | Star & 2 white feet | | of Laiton got by the |
| | | | | | Turk |

That entry of 1691 would seem to identify this chestnut colt as a son of a Turk bred by Captain Wilkinson of Layton in 1687 from a 1686 cover, on land leased from the Wharton estate. The stallion in this case could be one of several 'Turks' (Newdigate has two stallions that he designates as Turks) but is probably the horse who was known variously as the Wilkinson Barb/Arabian/Turk. When we realize that Andrew Wilkinson of Boroughbridge had possession of Lord Arlington's Natural Barb Mare before 1685 and we know that in that era Francis Wilkinson was breeding mares to his Turk, the possibility increases that the colt foal purchased by Philip Wharton from Andrew Wilkinson of Boroughbridge was a product of such a foreign pairing.

National Politics

Honest Tom Wharton (1679–85)

The kinship networks and topographical affiliations that lend texture to the story that I am presenting here take on added resonance from the way they blend dynastic features with protestant idiom. The Whartons were one of the most powerful families in England and they took pride in their claim to royal kinship. But Lord Wharton was also one of the most zealous Protestants and this was an important aspect of his relationship with his steward, Philip Swale, who was also a leader in George Fox's early Quaker movement. For the Quakers, family units extended beyond the nuclear family and marriage united families into one, thus the reference to 'cousin Wilkinson'.³² In practice, it often

³² Though I am not certain of the precise kinship relation, I believe that the Swale family was connected by marriage to the family of Adam Baker, who also appears to have been in Lord Wharton's employ; and that the Baker family was, in turn, connected by marriage to the Wilkinson family.

served as a general term for a vague relationship not necessarily a first cousin. From the other side of the aisle, Catholic families, prevented by penal laws until the Papists Act of 1778 from acquiring new land for a lease of more than 31 years, were under a *de facto* legal obligation to intermarry in order to preserve family fortunes. And as the reign of Charles II drew to a close, the conflicts over Church and State, Protestant and Catholic and Royalist and Republican once again emerged as profoundly vexed national issues.

We are inclined to see Charles's reign as long, and the Restoration as a period that saw the return to monarchy. But with no lawful progeny and a Catholic brother next in line for the throne, the reassertion of a protestant monarchy would have appeared relatively brief and fleeting. Not only was the Interregnum still within living memory but echoes of the bloody reprisals between Protestant and Catholic that marked post-Reformation England still resounded. Lord Wharton's father, for instance, had been born during the reign of Henry VIII. In the context of the most immediate hundred years, it was far from clear how some stability might be brought to the tempestuous ebb-and-flow that had marked national struggles over Church and State. For more than a few, particularly in the days that saw the unfolding of the Popish Plot at the end of the 1670s, the prospect offered by a Bill of Exclusion that would exclude from succession to the throne Charles II's Catholic brother James in favour of an act legitimizing the paternity of James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, was a comforting one and the most plausible way to insure a continuation of Protestant monarchy.

If, in fact, the Byerley Turk was the colt Philip Wharton purchased from Andrew Wilkinson, this would be the only known connection between Philip Wharton and horse racing. But that may not be so much of a stretch as it first sounds. His will indicates that he had some significant equine holdings, giving away eight horses to the four men he charges with administering his estate: '[...] the bay filly of the black mare [...] a bald-faced colt and any other horse that he shall chuse [...] Three horses that shall be sold to buy him a Good pad [...] [and] two of my best horses'.³³ There is, in these bequests, what seems to be a range of specificity and quality but clearly it was a large stable, containing animals of more than indifferent quality. Yet even more significantly, Philip Wharton's cousin, Thomas Wharton, was among the most active of early 'turfites' and it is Thomas Wharton who provides the connection between thoroughbred horse racing and modern

³³ Prob/11/379.

political campaigning. If Shaftsbury can be credited with inventing the Whig party and with it party politics, it is largely to Thomas Wharton, who assumed an important leadership role in the Whig party after the failure of Monmouth's Rebellion, that we owe our modern notions of political campaigning. He was a charismatic scoundrel and a tireless campaigner, who was widely-known by both his supporters and his adversaries as 'Honest Tom' Wharton: the only difference was that one side said ironically what the other side said sincerely. Generally, historians have followed a lead established by Dryden and the Tory propagandists of the era, which credited Shaftsbury with the role of power-broker extraordinaire and left Tom as merely a sporting Restoration rake, sowing his wild oats. By and large, that seems to be true and I would not put forward the claim that Thomas Wharton was already devising policy during the Exclusion crisis. But neither should we overlook how adroitly he blended his sporting interests with those interests in political campaigning that would come so prominently to the fore in the last decade of the seventeenth century.

In the immediate aftermath of the Popish Plot, Shaftsbury sought to force Charles to sign a Bill of Exclusion. His strategy was to use political control of Parliament tightly to hold the king's purse strings, while at the same time encouraging activities that would raise Monmouth's popularity, hoping that the combination of popular political support and financial necessity would carry the day: the very recipe of modern politics. This is, of course, well-documented. The two best-known instances of Monmouth's attempts at courting public opinion are his progresses undertaken in 1680 and 1682, during which he cultivated a growing retinue with lavish treats, the numbers of his followers increasing and becoming ever more raucous as the progress lengthened. Equally well-known at this point is that between these two progresses Charles secretly negotiated a private settlement with Louis XIV that allowed him to dispense with parliamentary funding – and therefore Parliament – altogether for the remainder of his reign.

What has largely gone unremarked by historians is the degree to which Monmouth's 'progresses' were built around and rationalized by racing events; so, Monmouth travelled from meet to meet, generating popular support by riding to victory on horses that were ostensibly his own but were actually provided for him by Thomas Wharton from the stud he was developing at Winchendon.³⁴ Decades later, Daniel

³⁴ Clark J., *Whig's Progress: Tom Wharton between Revolutions* (Cranbury NJ) 164 *et passim*.

Defoe, who joined Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, recalled seeing Monmouth ride to victory during these progresses: 'sometimes indeed the gentlemen ride themselves, as I have often seen the Duke of Monmouth, natural son to King Charles II ride his own horses at a match, and win it too, though he was a large man, and must weigh heavy'.³⁵ Thomas Wharton offered, at his stud at Winchendon, what was known simply as 'the Great Prize at Quainton Meadow' and, again, Defoe was among those attracted to the spectacle:

It was my hap formerly, to be at Aylesbury, when there was a mighty confluence of noblemen and gentlemen, at a famous horse race at Quainton-Meadow, not far off, where was then the late Duke of Monmouth, and a great many persons of the first rank, and a prodigious concourse of people.³⁶

By autumn 1682, Thomas Wharton had a horse who dominated all others and Monmouth rode him to victory repeatedly. The so-called Western Progress is structured by this horse's racing calendar, supplemented with other Wharton runners, racing in Monmouth's name. Notable, in particular, is September 12 when Monmouth rode the Wharton gelding to victory at Wallasey. On that date, Tories thought to sponsor a rival meet at Delamere Forest but Wharton found out about it, entered the race and won it as well. At Burford in November, Wharton/Monmouth horses won every race contested.³⁷ The autumn progress swelled Monmouth's numbers to new levels and brought action from the king, who had Monmouth arrested, then pardoned him.

The political horse-racing of Monmouth and Wharton culminated the following February in Paris. There, Louis XIV hosted an invitational race that drew the best horses from across Europe. Wharton's gelding, running as owned by the Duke of Monmouth, once again routed the field. Louis, after the race, said that to own such a horse he would gladly pay 1,000 pistoles: a royal fortune. Wharton, demonstrating the finesse which will soon make him the inventor of modern politicking, replied quickly that the horse was not for sale at any price but that he would be happy to have the king receive him as a gift. Louis, recognizing both the gesture and the price, declined.³⁸

³⁵ Defoe Daniel, *A tour through the whole island of Great Britain*, eds. G.D.H. Cole – D.C. Browning (London: 1974) ii 148.

³⁶ Ibid. ii 14.

³⁷ Clark, *Whig's Progress* 164.

³⁸ Macaulay T., *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (Philadelphia: 1856) 61.

That story has been told many times, most prominently by Macaulay, and almost always (I believe) missing the point. As it is most frequently told, it is presented as one of those bizarre, apparently pointless dances of etiquette attached to a bygone era of monarchy and deference, and the point, if one can be found, is that somehow Wharton preserved some sort of sporting honour for England. It may be, however, that the real stakes in the exchange (where diplomatic gifts entail obligations) were public demonstrations of political allegiance, whereby the ownership of a racehorse quite literally carried the sense of wearing another's livery. Wharton's horses raced for the Duke of Monmouth as a public demonstration of political fealty; one reading of the incident may be that had Louis accepted the gift from Wharton, he would have been indebted to Monmouth: his refusal signalled that his commitments lay elsewhere. The logical inference would be that he had already concluded a deal with Charles that would put an end to Monmouth's hopes that one could map a political path to the throne short of outright rebellion.

The Rye House Plot (1683)

If I am right about the intricate nuances of this racing diplomacy, it would not be lost on Wharton and Monmouth that they were not to find in France the support they were looking for: their only victory would be on the turf. Such a reading is consistent with how events develop in England, for the Rye House Plot was designed to assassinate Charles and James just two months later on their return from the races at Newmarket. That plot was thwarted when Newmarket burned during the first week of the race meet in March, sending the king and his brother home ahead of schedule. When the plot was exposed in June, Monmouth was forced into exile, from which he only returned in open rebellion in 1685, to be met by (among others) forces led by Robert Byerley. In tracing these events, we can see within the network of an extended family both a unifying principle and the practical fissures that emerge under the pressure of political upheaval. Both the Wharton and Byerley families seem to have been, like many of their neighbours in the North, wrestling with the pressures of strong royalist commitment on one hand and an equally strong protestant commitment on the other. Byerley's position seems to have been one of a Tory Anglican, fiercely loyal to his monarch; as such, the prospect

of a Bill of Exclusion legitimizing Monmouth would be welcome but, when it did not come, rather than join in rebellion he would fight on behalf of the king. After participating in the defeat of Monmouth, Byerley lost his military commission and he did not take up arms again until after James fled the country and William and Mary were crowned. He then fought – again, on behalf of the monarch – against the ‘foreign invader’, whom he had previously defended as his king. The Wharton interest, fully engaged with more extreme protestant dissent, seems to have struggled mightily with their royalist commitments. As mentioned earlier, Philip, Lord Wharton, had spent time in the Tower under Charles for his outspoken opposition to the possibility of a Catholic monarch, and the failure of Monmouth’s rebellion led him to voluntary exile throughout the brief reign of James. Thomas Wharton remained in England and was suspected of being deeply involved in Monmouth’s plans. When, at the time of the rebellion, his house in Buckinghamshire was seized and searched, he was discovered to have stockpiled a large cache of arms. But he himself had not, in fact, come out in active support of the rebellion and his argument that the law placed no limits on how fully one might defend one’s household kept him at liberty. He was thus able to take up a prominent position in the Whig party that emerged from the rebellion, filling the leadership vacuum left after the Bloody Assizes.

The trimming position that forges an alliance between Wharton and Byerley – aggressive support of a protestant cause that stops short of open rebellion against the monarch – may even make sense of the abduction of Mary Wharton and the unprecedented vigour with which the family prosecuted it. Certainly, the primary motive for James Campbell’s abduction of Mary was to gain access to her significant wealth. But it is worth recalling that James was the fourth son of the Duke of Argyll, who had lost his life by joining Monmouth in open rebellion in 1685. Now, in 1690, with the return of a protestant monarch, those who had been most zealous in rebellion five years earlier may have seen the abduction of Mary as a way of punishing the trimmers who had remained at home and let the rebellion fail. The vigorous pursuit mobilized by Hutton Byerley, in turn, speaks of the effectiveness with which the family enlisted Parliament and royal authority on behalf of a more moderate Whig interest. Such a narrative may also account for why, five years after the event, Hutton Byerley was accosted, challenged and killed in a swordfight while leaving his home, an event explained at the time as retaliation for his efforts in annul-

ling the Wharton-Campbell marriage and bringing Sir John Johnston to Tyburn.

Beware a Bastard Breed

This version of events involves Thomas Wharton's sporting alliance with the Duke of Monmouth in a role more central and less peripheral than has previously been thought, and clearly indicates the degree to which his racing interests were implicated in his family's active engagement in establishing a protestant succession to the throne. Thomas Wharton's joint racing and political activities on behalf of Monmouth in the early 1680s, culminating in the trip to France early in 1683, provide a context in which the possibility of Philip Wharton's acquisition of high-bred horseflesh seems all the more likely. It is, of course, even possible that Philip was in France with his cousin when the Wharton gelding conquered all before him. If so, this may be the occasion on which he met the beautiful young Huguenot, Angelica Magdalena Pellisary, whom he would marry the following year.

The case I have been making is for a plausible counter-narrative to the one we have inherited that we know to be false. I cannot claim to have definitive proof that the horse, who came to be known as Byerley's Turk, is the colt that Philip Wharton acquired from Andrew Wilkinson. At most, I have offered a specific, plausible candidate, one that is more plausible than the current view that the horse was imported as spoils of battle from a war in which his owner never fought. The colt acquired by Philip Wharton in the winter of 1684/85 would have been the right age to be the Byerley Turk, was acquired from someone active in the early breeding of thoroughbreds, quite possibly from significant imported bloodlines, and was in Byerley's possession in his capacity as guardian of Mary Wharton. Interestingly, such a revisionist account suggests a different origin-point for the thoroughbred: in place of successful military intervention abroad, this story would locate the thoroughbred within a context of internal rebellion and the manoeuvres of an emergent modern political state. In that last context, it may be particularly relevant, when thinking of the abduction of Mary Wharton and of the political associations with Monmouth's cause to recall the compounded ironies of the royalist admonition that appears at the end of Sir Richard Newdigate's account book, dated 1691: "beware a bastard breed."

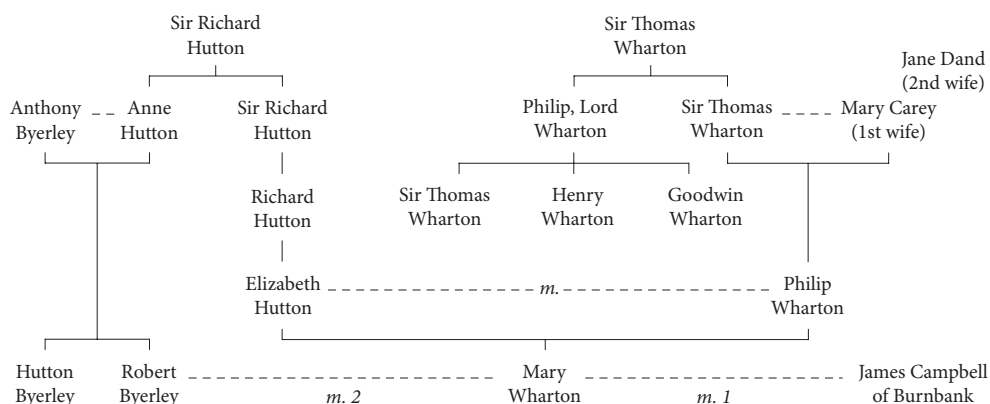


Fig. 2. Genealogical chart showing the Byerley-Wharton family links.

Key to the map on p. 215:

Places mentioned in the text & seats and studs of racehorse owners:

1. West Layton: home of Francis Wilkinson
2. Ravensworth Park: leased to Francis Wilkinson and part of the Wharton estate
3. Kirkby Ravensworth: leased to Andrew Wilkinson of Boroughbridge
4. Sedbury: seat of James Darcy, who bred many progenitors of the thoroughbred
5. Gatherley Moor: probably the earliest site of horse racing in early modern England
6. Carlton Hall: seat of Thomas Pulleine esquire, William III's studmaster
7. Barforth Hall: seat of John Crofts, the owner of *Partner*, a descendant of the Byerley Turk
8. Selaby Hall, seat of Richard Marshall, William III's studmaster
9. Middridge Grange: seat of Anthony Byerley, father of Robert and Hutton Byerley, and wife of Anne, Mary Wharton's guardian
10. Low Dinsdale: seat of Rowland Place, Protector Cromwell's studmaster
11. Halnaby Hall: seat of Ralph Milbanke, a noted breeder, who married Elizabeth Darcy, James Darcy's daughter, and whose sister married Cuthbert Routh

12. Marske Hall: seat of John Hutton, the breeder of Eclipse
13. Constable Burton Hall: seat of the Wyvill family
14. Northallerton and Sand Hutton: seats of the Metcalfe family, noted breeders and racehorse owners
15. Snape Hall seat of Cuthbert Routh, noted breeder and racehorse owner
16. Boroughbridge: home of Andrew Wilkinson and his cousin, Andrew Wilkinson
17. Goldsborough Hall: seat of Robert Byerley
18. North Milford Hall: seat of the Leedes family, whose horses feature prominently in the early bloodlines of the thoroughbred.

Sites of race meetings:

- a. Askrigg
- b. Fremington (Reeth)
- c. Richmond
- d. Yarm
- e. Stokesley
- f. Middleham
- g. Bedale
- h. Northallerton
- i. Ripon
- j. Boroughbridge
- k. Knaresborough
- l. Follifoot (Harrogate)
- m. York
- n. Bramham

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‘THE MOST EXCELLENT OF ANIMAL CREATURES’:
HEALTH CARE FOR HORSES IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Louise Hill Curth

Of all four-footed Beasts I cannot find any so useful to man, and so serviceable as is that generous Creature we call an Horse. Neither doth the pleasure man receives by him, come any ways short of the profit he reaps thereby. In peace he serves to till the ground; and as he takes great pains in causing the earth to bring forth its fruits in its proper season...if the gallantry of his Masters spirits commands him to the War, how cheerfully he obeys, and foams with impatience, till he shares in his riders self-propounded honour!¹

Although first published in 1673, the quotation above is a perfect illustration of the high esteem in which horses have been held for thousands of years. Perhaps not surprisingly, the exact nature of their value has changed over time. During the earliest stages of human-kind their flesh was eaten to supplement a daily diet of megafauna. Amongst the earlier animals to become domesticated, their major role soon changed to providing various forms of physical labour, including the brute force required for agricultural production, transportation and the needs of war. Horses also played an important role in ancient sports such as horse- or chariot-racing. By the beginning of the Gallo-Roman period adulation of these animals had elevated them to what has been described as ‘cult status’. In Britain, this was headed by the Celtic horse-goddess Epona (or Hippone), who was known as ‘a breeder’s goddess’ and ‘a general equestrian deity’.²

Numerous sources throughout the middle ages refer to the important role that horses played in British society and culture. According to Ann Hyland, the great demand for these animals resulted in Britain

¹ Almond Robert, *The English Horsman and Complete Farrier* (London, Simon Miller: 1673) fol. B1r.

² Horan R.D. *et al.*, “A Paleoeconomic Theory of Co-evolution and Extinction of Domesticable Animals”, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy* 59, 2 (2003) 131–148; Karasszon D., *A Concise History of Veterinary Medicine*, transl. E. Farkas (Budapest: 1988) 70, 106; Fuller Tovey E.F. – Yolken R., *Beasts of the Earth* (London: 2005) 36–37; Hyland A., *The Horse in the Middle Ages* (Stroud: 1999) 4–5.

becoming a major 'horse-breeding nation' by the early eleventh century. Fulfilling various roles, from 'luxury item' to basic necessity, horses played an increasingly visible role in medieval society. As one late fifteenth century writer succinctly stated, 'ther is no beest rekene as I began, soo necessarye as horse to man'. After a late medieval decline, the quality had improved by the turn of the sixteenth century, enabling Gervase Markham to claim that, 'the very finest horses were English, being 'of tolerable shape, strong, valiant, swift and durable'.³

Although impressive sounding, such sentiments were actually built upon a base of 'absolute anthropocentrism'. As with other animals, horses were believed to have been put on earth to satisfy the needs of humans, whether for labour, food, sport or scientific experimentation. In some cases, animals were also valued for their ability to enhance human life through more aesthetic ideals such as beauty and companionship.⁴ A basic requirement for all of these roles, however, was that of health. There were numerous costs involved in trying to maintain this state, beginning with the purchase of a strong, disease-free animal, followed by a lifetime of providing good food, shelter and medical care.

While there were often emotional or ethical reasons for wanting one's horses to be healthy, for non-elite horse-owners the dominant factor was usually economic. In the first place, most horses were extremely expensive to purchase. Actual costs, of course, would have varied greatly, depending on the purpose of the animal in question. At the top of the hierarchy were those meant to participate in 'wars, service or pleasures of great Princes'. Following on in descending order were those blessed with 'swiftnesse in running, or toughnes in hunting: some for easinesse of pace, and the vse of trauell', down to the lowliest destined for 'the draught and the portage of great burthens'. General figures from the first two decades of the seventeenth century show prices ranging from £2 to £10 in the North. As expected, values in the South, especially in London, were much higher. As horses were

³ Hyland, *The Horse in the Middle Ages* 6, 35–40; Lydgate J., *Here bygenneth a lytell treatyse of the horse, the sheep and the ghoos* (London: 1495), fol. 4v; Markham Gervase, *Cauelarice, or The English horseman* (London, E. White: 1617) 10.

⁴ Maehle A.H., "The Ethical Discourse on Animal Experimentation", in Wear A.J. et al. (eds.), *Doctors and Ethics: The Earlier Historical Setting of Professional Ethics* (Amsterdam: 1993) 204; Edwards P., *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London: 2007) 22; Thomas K., *Man and the Natural World* (London: 1983) 19.

particularly prone to illness and injury, it was also expensive to provide suitable stabling, food and medical care for them.⁵

Although many aspects of early modern horses have been studied by scholars, until fairly recently health care has received relatively little attention. This has also been true in the field of medical history. There are various reasons for this appalling dearth of writings on medical options for animals, beginning with anthropocentrism and the fact that most medical historians perceive human health and illness as being more worthy of study than provision for animals.⁶ In addition, although a relatively small, but growing, number of academics interested in animal health does exist, most of them concentrate on the modern period. In general, their choice of starting date is 1791, the foundation-year of the London Veterinary College. The earlier 'pre-veterinary' period is either excluded or dealt with very briefly as a time when sick animals were subjected to the attentions of ignorant, one-dimensional and dangerous quacks, or simply left to die.⁷

Principles Behind Early Modern Veterinary Medicine

Although the definitions for terms such as 'health' and 'illness' might seem to be self-evident, this is not the case. In reality, there are many different ways to define them, each influenced by a range of social and cultural factors which change over time. A recent report by the UK government, for example, defines a healthy animal as one which is 'disease-free and well looked after'.⁸ This idea is clearly linked to the

⁵ Markham, *Cauelatrice*, Book I, 18; Parkes J., *Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: 1925) 61.

⁶ Porter R., "Man, Animals and Medicine at the Time of the Founding of the Royal Veterinary College", in Mitchell A.R. (ed.), *History of the Healing Professions* 3 (London: 1993) 19.

⁷ Cotchin E., *The Royal Veterinary College: A Bicentenary History* (Buckingham: 1990) 13; Dunlop R. – Williams D., *Veterinary History* (London: 1996); Karasszon, *Veterinary Medicine*; Pattison I., *The British Veterinary Profession 1791–1948* (London: 1984); Pugh L., *From Farriery to Veterinary Medicine 1785–1795* (Cambridge: 1962); Smithcors F.J., *Evolution of the Veterinary Art: A Narrative Account to 1850* (London: 1958); Swabe J., *The Burden of Beast: A Historical Sociological Study of Changing Human-Animal Relations and the Rise of the Veterinary Regime* (Amsterdam: 1997); Wilkinson L., *Animals and Disease: An Introduction to the History of Comparative Medicine* (Cambridge: 1992).

⁸ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/about-us/index.htm> [accessed 10 November 2010].

modern, predominant biomedical model which focuses on pathogens and disease. In this medical model, the body is viewed as a machine 'made up of its component parts and systems', which theoretically could be addressed separately in order to eradicate the pathogens.⁹ It is, however, debatable as to whether a living creature could ever be totally free of any type of pathogen.

The early modern concept of health was predominantly a holistic, traditional dual mind-body system. It centred on the idea that disease was not an independent entity but something that affected every part of a living creature. As a result, disease could manifest itself differently in humans and animals, according to such variables as age, strength and constitution. A strong, generally healthy horse might, for example, be able to function fairly well even if it was suffering from some physical disorder. On the other hand, a so-called 'healthy' horse might be harbouring an undiagnosed disease. What was important, in early modern terms, was whether the animal was in a 'balanced' or 'imbalanced' state. In order to determine this, a human would need to consider a range of factors. In the case of horses, this would necessitate determining what its humoral 'constitution' or 'complexion' was, in addition to information about its place of origin, its age, living conditions, working patterns and so on.

There were two central physiological principles that lay behind humoralism. Firstly, all bodies contained a mixture of the four basic fluids or humours of blood, phlegm, yellow bile or choler and black bile or melancholy.¹⁰ Since the combination varied between individuals, it was the predominant humour which shaped and defined their 'constitution' or 'complexion'. In addition, it helped to determine the types of diseases they would be most subject to, their character, emotional state and the types of food and drink that would be considered healthy for them. The basic balance was set at birth, although these tended to vary somewhat with age.¹¹ A horse that had a predominance of the phlegm humour, for example, would have the propensity to be slow and sluggish. While these characteristics might be masked

⁹ Twigg J., *The Body in Health and Social Care* (Basingstoke: 2006) 5.

¹⁰ Culpeper Nicholas, *Galen's Art of Physick* (London: 1657) 6.

¹¹ Wear A., *Knowledge & Practice in English Medicine, 1550–1680* (Cambridge: 2000) 37; Nutton V., "Humoralism", in Bynum W.F. – Porter R. (eds.), *Companion Encyclopedia to the History of Medicine* (London: 1993) vol. I, 281.

somewhat by the general energy found in a young animal, they would become increasingly evident as it aged.

Contemporaries often linked coat colour with humour as a means of assessing a horse's constitution and capabilities. It could also be used to determine the specific tasks that individual horses were expected to fulfil. 'Bright Sorrell' horses, for example, were 'hot, fiery, and of little strength', signifying that choler was their predominant humour. While this made them unsuitable for heavy labour, these traits were ideal for those heading off to war. A phlegmatic beast, on the other hand, might have either 'milky white' or a 'very white' hide and would be 'slow, dull, and heavy'. While not sounding very attractive, such characteristics were actually suitable 'for Cart and plow [and] to labour in Mills'.¹² Susceptibility to disease was similarly colour-coded. Thus, as the pigmentation of a 'cole-black' horse was thought to be caused by the heat generated by excessive choler, it meant that it would most likely fall ill with 'Pestilence, Feavours, Inflammation of the Liver, and other hot Diseases'. Pale, white phlegmatic horses, on the other hand, were prone to cold, wet diseases such as disorders of the lungs.¹³

Although attributed to 'the antient writers', the concept continued to appear in popular veterinary texts throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁴ This is mainly due to the continuing production of new editions of earlier texts by authors such as Jacques de Solleysel, Gervase Markham and A.S.¹⁵ Books written in the eighteenth century, on the other hand, did not agree with these theories. In 1738 Henry Bracken disparaged the many writers and 'particularly Markham', who 'pretend to tell by the Colour of a Horse which of the Elements has the Ascendant in him'. He grudgingly agreed, however, that 'there is something

¹² Markham Gervase, *Markhams Maister-Peece* (London, Arthur Johnson: 1610) 11–13; Markham Gervase, *Markham's Master-Piece Revived* (London, John Wright and Thomas Passenger: 1681) 7.

¹³ G.L., *Gentleman's new jockey* (London, Nicholas Boddington: 1696) 24–25; Almond, *English Horsman* 19–21.

¹⁴ Galen, *Selected Works*, transl. P.N. Singer (Oxford: 1972) xii; Physiologus Philotheos, *The country-man's companion: or, A New Method of Ordering Horses & Sheep So as to preserve them both from diseases and casualties* (London, Andrew Sowle: 1688) 2, 4; A.S., *The Gentleman's Compleat Jockey* (London, Henry Nelme: 1697) 25–26; Physiologus, *The country-man's companion*.

¹⁵ Solleysel Jacques de, *The Compleat Horseman* (London, J. Walthoe: 1729); Markham Gervase, *Markham's Master-Piece* (London: 1737); A.S., *The gentleman's complete jockey* (London: 1782).

in the Colour of a Horse which may denote his being hardy and able to endure all Weathers'.¹⁶

The humoral balance and constitution of individual horses could also be used to determine the best way to care for them. As Peter Edwards has noted, the conditions in which they were kept could vary greatly according to their owners and where they lived. Horses belonging to humble owners might be fed on the commons in the summer and subsist on meagre rations in the winter. Wealthier owners would possess stables which were ideally 'open to the Aire' and regularly cleaned. At the top end of the scale, horses might be provided with purpose-built housing, finely tuned diets and a specialised regime. One contemporary writer accused such gentlemen of taking more care in the 'ordering and dieting' of their horses than they did of themselves.¹⁷ Although the introduction of new crops and methods of preserving animal feed changed over time, some basic guidelines remained the same. The first was the importance of not feeding animals an 'ill dyet', a term that generally referred to damp or otherwise spoiled foodstuffs. Pastures provided a mixture of grass and weeds, which could be eaten fresh in the summer or dried for winter use. Stabled horses could also be fed a range of other foods, including oats, wheat-straw, peas or beans.¹⁸ The type, quantity and quality of their feed also played an important role in helping to preserve their health.

This emphasis on prevention was at the heart of early modern, holistic health beliefs. It was widely accepted that 'one of the most important businesses of this Life, [was] to preserve our selves in Health'. This concept also applied to animals, who were 'exceeding useful and serviceable to Man, and of no small value in themselves'.¹⁹

There were thought to be three basic types of phenomena which would determine whether a living creature was healthy or diseased. These consisted of 'thynges natur', 'thynges not naturall' and 'thynges ageynst nature'. The first included the unchangeable factors of the four

¹⁶ Bracken Henry, *Farriery improved: or a compleat treatise upon the art of farriery* (London, J. Shuckburgh: 1737) 3.

¹⁷ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 37; Tryon Thomas, *The Way to Save Wealth* (London: 1695) 43; Physiologus Philotheos, *The Good housewife made a Doctor* (London, Andrew Sowle: 1685[?]) fol. A3v.

¹⁸ Almond, *English Horsman* 51; Markham, *Markhams Maister-Peece* 2.

¹⁹ Physiologus, *Good housewife* fol. A2v; Saunders Richard, *Apollo Anglicanus: the English Apollo* (London: 1682) fol. A7r; Wadham William, *England's Choice Cabinet of Rarities* (London: 1700[?]) 3.

elements of earth, air, fire and water, which manifested themselves as the four humours. According to Galenic thought, the second category of 'things non-natural' could alter one's humoral imbalance, whereby 'sicknesse is induced and the bodie dissolved'. These six non-naturals consisted of 'ayre', 'meate and drynke', 'slepe and watche', 'meuying and rest', 'emptynesse and repletion' and 'affectations of the mynde'.²⁰ The final category that could influence health consisted of 'contra-naturals', that is, things against nature. These comprised pathological conditions made up of 'sycknesse', 'cause of sycknesse' and 'iccidents, whiche foloweth syckenes'.²¹

The 'things not natural' or 'non-naturals' included a number of areas which humans could influence in order to try to keep their animals healthy. It is hardly surprising that the first non-natural focused on the all-encompassing element of air. The ancient Greeks believed that air was 'the most powerful of all things', linked not only to human and animal life but also to the transmission of disease. In the early modern period, there were a range of gradients for what constituted 'good' or 'bad' air, with the aim being to try to 'Keepe your selfe in a pure Ayre'.²² Gervase Markham advised his readers that the best air was 'pure, sharp, cleare and piercing' and it would 'giueth great life and nourishment to a horse'.²³

Markham also provided guidelines for horses in the second non-natural of food and drink. In common with other writers on animal health, he felt that diet played as important a role for animals as it did for humans.²⁴ The Hippocratic text, *On Ancient Medicine*, suggests that 'in the beginning' both humans and beasts were able to be 'nourished, grow, and lead their lives free of trouble' by eating 'fruits, brush,

²⁰ Niebyl P.H., "The Non-naturals", *British History of Medicine*, 45 (1971) 486–492; Cogan T., *The Haven of Health* (London, William Norton: 1584), fol. A4r; Rather L.J., "The Six Things Non-Natural", *Clio Medica* 3 (1968) 337–347; Jarcho S., "Galen's Six Non-Naturals", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 44 (1970) 372–377; Elyot T., *The Castel of Helth* (London, Thomas Bertheleti: 1539) fol. A1r.

²¹ Elyot, *Castel of Helth* fol. A1r; Gil-Sotres P., "The Regimens of Health", in Grmek M.D. (ed.), *Western Medical Thought from antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass. – London: 1998) 291–318.

²² Harris C.R.S., *The Heart and the Vascular System in Ancient Greek Medicine from Alcmaeon to Galen* (Oxford: 1973) 43; Longrigg J., *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians* (London: 1993) 76–78; Nutton V., "The Seeds of Disease", in idem, *From Democedes to Harvey* XI (London: 1988) 1–34; Langley Thomas, *A new almanac and prognostication* (London: 1643) fol. B3r.

²³ Markham, *Markham's Master-Peece* 20.

²⁴ Ibid. 21.

and grass'. It goes on to say that, although humans were forced to 'seek forms of more differentiated forms of nourishment better suited to their constitutions', a 'strong and brutish regimen' continued to serve animals. The exact type of food could vary between species, as it was thought that the healthiest items were those 'which match their constitution'. Horses which were sick, however, were to be fed that which 'is contrary to their temperament' in order to re-balance their humours.²⁵ In all cases, however, all of the 'meat and drink of a horse' needed to be 'sweet, clean and good'.²⁶

The third and fourth non-naturals of sleep and waking, followed by labour and rest, were of great importance in the struggle to keep working animals healthy. As one writer noted, 'sleep is so necessary a Comfort to a Horse, that he cannot live without it'. Gervase Markham wrote that horses needed to be set 'fit times and seasons for sleeping and waking, both of which must be moderately taken'. It was suggested that horses exhausted by 'hard labour' or 'over-riding' should be 'well rubbed', then allowed to rest for up to three hours. Racing horses, on the other hand, were expected to conserve their strength and only be allowed to run two 'matches' a week. In addition, they should be allowed to sleep from nine in the evening until 'just before sunrise' the next day.²⁷ As with much health advice, it was not always followed. For instance, head-to-head matches, run over several miles, were complemented by plates in which a number of horses competed against each other in several heats, again of several miles.²⁸

The next non-natural of 'emptiness' and 'repletion' had to do with removing excess humours or adding to the ones that were lacking. Depending on the circumstances, these could be carried out either as a preventative or a remedial measure. In his almanac for 1661, for instance, John Booker provides humoral advice at the top of the page for each month, indicating the particular problems to be encountered at the time and the means of counteracting them.²⁹ According to

²⁵ Grant M., *Galen on Food and Diet* (London: 2000) 190.

²⁶ Hippocrates, *On Ancient Medicine*, transl. M.J. Schiefsky (Leiden: 2005) 77; Markham, *Markhams Maister-Peece* 21.

²⁷ Mortimer John, *The whole art of Husbandry, or, the way of managing and improving of land*. (London: 1707) 153; Markham Gervase, *The Complete jockey* (London: 1695) 41; Physiologus, *Country-man's Companion* 7; Almond, *English horsman* 31–33.

²⁸ Edwards P., *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London: 2007) 102–106.

²⁹ Booker J., *Telescopium Uranicum* (London: 1661) January–December 1661.

Gervase Markham, most farriers agreed that 'whosoever can take away Corruption and add Perfection, shall without doubt ever keep an able and substantial Body'.³⁰ The modern definition of purging generally refers to the emptying of the bowels or stomach. However, in early modern England century this was only one of many different methods used to remove various unwanted materials from the body. Others included vomiting or 'neesing' [sneezing] and using 'clysters' [enemas] or diuretics. Phlebotomy, depending on where the blood was let from, could purge all sections of the body. 'Sweating', on the other hand, was a more general method of cleaning unwanted substances from the system.

The final non-natural illustrated, perhaps more than any other, the close relationship between the mind and the body. It was widely accepted that 'passions and emotions' could have both positive and negative effects on wellbeing. There were various contemporary explanations as to how an excess of passions would lead to illness. One theory was that giving free rein to any of them would 'divert the vital heat from the circumference to the centre'. This would result in the body being weakened, perhaps causing a range of mental or physical disorders.³¹ Unlike the other non-naturals, however, there are some difficulties in applying it to animals because of the on-going debate during the early modern period as to whether animals actually experienced emotions. The seventh century scholar, Isidore of Seville, stated that horses were 'the only creature that weeps for man and feels the emotion of grief'. In the twelfth century Albertus Magnus argued that they share traits such as 'knowledge, habits (that is, good or bad customary behaviour), fear, boldness [...] concupiscence, desire, wrath and the like with humans'.³² Other medieval authors held that animals lacked the ability to 'reason' and therefore could only behave instinctively.³³ That said, by the seventeenth century many people believed that animals did have passions and emotions. Gervase Markham argued that horses 'haue sense and feeling of affections as namely, to loue, to hate, to be angry, to reioyce, to be sorry, and to feare'. As Keith Thomas

³⁰ Markham, *Markhams Maister-Peece* 23.

³¹ Culpeper, *Galen's Art* 132.

³² Brehaut E., *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages: Isidore of Seville* (New York: 1912) 144; Albertus M., *On Animals: A Medieval Zoological Summary* I, transl. K.F. Kitchell – I.M. Resnick (Baltimore: 1999) 606.

³³ Salisbury J.E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: 1994) 5.

has pointed out, such sentiments were part of an increasing tendency to credit animals with 'reason, intelligence, language and almost every other human quality'.³⁴

Practitioners

Although the major emphasis was on prevention, owners could choose from an assortment of therapeutic methods and practitioners when such attempts failed. Many healers specialised in treating the elite and most valuable members of the domesticated animal kingdom. These included what might now be called 'qualified professionals', as well as a range of other self-styled animal doctors and lay-people. Caring for the health of horses was not an easy job, for while humans could voice their 'complaints and relations', 'dumb creatures' could not do so. Nonetheless, as Elkes stressed, the main duty of animal healers was the same as a physician, which 'consisteth, in two principall points, First to preserve health. Secondly, To cure the sick'.³⁵

The members of the Company of Farriers occupied the top of the horse-healing hierarchy and were, theoretically, the most highly skilled practitioners. Founded in 1356, 'the Brotherhood of ffaryer [...] [was] of great antiquity and of great use and benefitt [sic] to our Subjects for preserving of horses'. There was some debate as to the origins of the word, with one early modern writer attributing it to Henry de Ferrais, William I's 'Master of the Horse'. Others, however, linked it to the Latin "ferrarius" or "ferrum", the word for horseshoe, and related to 'the working of iron'. However, by the late middle ages a distinction was being made between blacksmiths, who manufactured shoes, and the farriers, who shod and treated the illnesses of horses, even if in practice a good deal of overlapping persisted. In October 1616, for instance, Sir Richard Cholmeley paid £1 10s. to a smith who had cured his black mare, having tended her at his own home for almost a month.³⁶

³⁴ Markham, *Markhams Maister-Peece* 24; Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* 128–129.

³⁵ Snape Andrew, *The Anatomy of an Horse* (London: 1683) fol. B1r-v; Elkes Richard, *Approved Medicines of Little Cost* (London: 1652) fol. A2v.

³⁶ Guildhall Library, MS.5534, *Farrier Court Journals* (1674) 1; Howell James, *Londinopolis, an historicall discourse, or perlustration of the City of London* (London, H. Twyford: 1657) 45; Prince L., *The Farrier and His Craft. The History of the Wor-*

The Company of Farriers was an elite and relatively small organisation. In 1674, for example, it had forty-members, including a master, three wardens and 'not above twenty, nor under tenne assistants'.³⁷ These men were subject to a number of rules and regulations throughout their career. These included serving an apprenticeship 'by the space of sevene yeares at the least' with an experienced farrier. In theory, this should have guaranteed that the time-served apprentice possessed at least a minimum level of competence and prevented too many skilled men from flooding the market. This, in turn, reduced competition, provided the qualified adult with a reasonable income and helped to reassure his clients.³⁸

More importantly, the Company also held the legal right to impose a monopoly on their trade in London and within a seven-mile radius. In reality, this proved impossible to enforce, as their livelihood was regularly challenged by:

unskillfull persons inhabiting within the Liberties of the said cities [London and Westminster] have of late taken upon them the said Art and Mystery, who have thereby for want of due knowledge and skill in the right way of preserving of horses destroyed many horses in or near the same cities.³⁹

Even greater numbers of horse healers competed for custom outside of the 'protected' areas. Many of these men were said to 'come into this same Citie and fetche out horses of Innes and other houses', resulting in Company members not being 'able to lyf by there said craft'.⁴⁰

Given the large numbers of horses in both town and country, it is hardly surprising that the Company of Farriers faced such heavy competition from self-styled farriers, horse-doctors, horseleeches or leeches.⁴¹ During the Middle Ages, the word 'leech' referred to all types of healers, not merely because they used leeches to draw blood but

shipful Company of Farriers (London: 1980) 1; Ashcroft M.Y., *Documents relating to the Swaledale Estates of Lord Wharton in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Northallerton: 1984) 214.

³⁷ Guildhall Library, MS.5534, 2-4.

³⁸ Ibid. 2; Lane J., "The role of apprenticeship in eighteenth-century medical education in England", in Bynum W. - Porter R. (eds.), *William Hunter and the Eighteenth Century Medical World* (Cambridge: 1985) 61.

³⁹ Idem, MS.5534, 1.

⁴⁰ Guildhall Library, MS.2890, 41.

⁴¹ Merrick W., *The Classical Farrier* (London: 1788) iv.

because of the corruption of an old English word meaning healer.⁴² Such men far outnumbered the membership of the Company of Farriers and dominated healing in the countryside.

According to Leonard Mascall, the main functions of farriers and horse leeches were concerned with the easing of 'sorenesse and diseases in Horses'.⁴³ This is supported in numerous manuscripts sources that refer to the type of work they carried out. In March 1684, for instance, the estate accounts of the Burdett family of Foremark Hall refer to the payment of 1s. 4d. to a 'horse Leich' for letting blood from the bay gelding. Although it is not clear whether this procedure was for preventative or remedial purposes, the important point is that he, and others like him, who appear in the records, was trusted with a potentially dangerous task. This suggests that expertise or reputation of the leech was considered to be as important as any formal qualifications he may or may not have held.⁴⁴

Naturally, these provincial horse-doctors did not comprehend the core concept of humoralism in the same way as a University educated physician would have done. Most of the 'popular' veterinary literature on the subject of veterinary practice seemed to expect only a rudimentary grasp of humoral principles. At the most basic level, this encompassed an understanding of the essential nature of the four humours and how that might affect an animal's state of health or illness. Nonetheless, horse-owners at the time, even members of the elite, did not shun their services and not merely because the level of stigma attached to untrained 'unqualified' practitioners was not as great as it would be today. Harold Cook has argued that the most important thing for a medical practitioner was to have a 'good reputation'.⁴⁵ This seems an eminently sensible conclusion, as the concept of a reputation encompasses a variety of attributes, from communication skills to the ability to bring relief to a suffering patient. Furthermore, as David Harley has pointed out, consumers were seeking health, rather than a specific

⁴² Pollington S., *Leechcraft: Early English Charms, Plantlife and Healing* (Trowbridge: 2000) 41.

⁴³ Mascall Leonard, *The Government of Cattle* (London: 1587) 99.

⁴⁴ Thanks to Pete Edwards for the following reference: Derbys R.O., Burdett of Foremark MSS, D 156/M123, account of William Fraunces of Ticknall, steward, 1684.

⁴⁵ H. Cook, *The Decline of the Old Medical Regime in Stuart London* (London: 1986) 49.

type of medical service or 'qualified' practitioner.⁴⁶ Indeed, the continuing existence of such men over such a long period of time provides evidence of continuing patronage.⁴⁷ Estate records indicate that landowners patronised farriers and other horse-doctors on a regular basis, mostly for specific jobs but sometimes putting them on the payroll. In the 1580s, for instance, Henry Pickering and George Middleton were regularly hired to tend to horses respectively on the Paget estate at Beaudesert in Staffordshire and the Petre estate at Ingatestone in Essex.⁴⁸

The presence of such horse healers also contradicts the negative stereotypes placed on them by modern scholars. Historians like Lise Wilkinson have suggested that such men were likely to be uneducated and even illiterate. Such a statement incorrectly implies that people were either literate or not. In fact, there were many different levels of literacy. The top end included highly educated readers, whereas at the bottom readers had to make do with a very basic or 'functional literacy'. Information about health care for horses appeared in a number of different formats, including specialised texts, general veterinary manuals and various types of ephemeral literature. Many almanacs, for example, offered very simplistic advice on caring for animals.⁴⁹ In addition, evidence suggests that popular literature was also shared through the oral culture, often by being read aloud in public places.⁵⁰

One of the reasons for stereotypical views about illiteracy is the tendency to assume that reading and writing were mutually exclusive. In the first place, reading was a skill taught separately from writing.⁵¹ Some rural communities had schools, albeit often short-lived, where the poor could acquire a rudimentary education. Others may have gained this knowledge at home. Recent research also intimates that literacy was steadily increasing in the countryside at a higher level than previously thought. Although horse healers were not 'educated'

⁴⁶ D. Harley, "The Good Physician and the Godly Doctor: The Exemplary Life of John Tylston of Chester (1663–1699)", *The Seventeenth Century* 9 (1994) 94.

⁴⁷ Snape Edward, *A Practical Treatise on Farriery* (London: 1791) 1.

⁴⁸ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 64.

⁴⁹ Curth L.H., *English Almanacs, astrology and popular medicine, 1550–1700* (Manchester: 2006) Chapter 10.

⁵⁰ Beal P., *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and Their Makers in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: 1998); Coleman J., *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: 1999) xi, 2.

⁵¹ Wheale N., *Writing and Society: Literacy, Print and Politics in Britain 1590–1660* (London: 1999) 2.

by modern standards, it seems likely that many possessed the 'practical and pragmatic' skills required to carry out everyday business matters.⁵² On the most rudimentary level, this would have included the ability to keep basic records. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find surviving examples of 'direct' evidence of business practices. The large numbers of veterinary texts, however, provides indirect proof of the literacy of horse healers.⁵³ One author explained that in order to treat horses, such men needed to

well and perfectly understande of the present disease in the horse before they minister. Also to looke on him well, howe manie other griefes are growing on him...also the operation of all such herbes, and drugges, as he doeth minister unto them. With what quantitie and portion of eche thing thereof, and in what time and houre of the daie and yeere is best.⁵⁴

Despite the relatively large numbers of farriers, horse-doctors and leeches, lay people probably administered the greatest proportion of animal health care. In most households, women carried out the medical care for humans and small animals. There is little evidence to suggest that this would have been the case for larger animals such as horses. According to contemporary writers, men working as farmers, innholders or husbandmen were also likely to have at least some rudimentary knowledge about medical treatments. So did men, who regularly worked with horses: grooms and 'horse-men' or jockeys, particularly those for 'that doth live farre remote, from Farriers help; City, or Towne of note.' Such knowledge was imperative for, as Mascall reminded readers, 'It shalbe smal profite to the husbandman to giue his beast meate, and knowe not howe to helpe and keepe them in health and strength'.⁵⁵

⁵² Wilkinson, *Animals and Disease* 10; Laurence A., *Women in England 1500–1760* (London: 1994) 165; Hobby E., *Virtue of Necessity* (London: 1988) 191; Mendelson S. – Crawford P., *Women in Early Modern England 1550–1720* (Oxford: 1998) 90; Friedman J., *Miracles and the Pulp Press During the English Revolution* (London: 1993) 5.

⁵³ See for example de Grey Thomas, *The Compleat Horseman and Expert Ferrier* (London, Lawrence Chapman: 1639); Almond, *The English Horsman* fol. A1r; and multiple books by Gervase Markham.

⁵⁴ Mascall Leonard, *The Government of Cattell* (London: 1587) 99.

⁵⁵ Poole William, *The Countrey Farrier* (London: 1648) fol. A3; Markham Gervase, *A Way to get Wealth* (London: Roger Iackson: 1625) 8; D. Simonton, *A History of European Womens Work 1700 to the Present* (London: 1998) 20; Prince, *Farrier* 227; Anon., *English Farrier* (London, John Wright: 1649) fol. A2r; Mascall, *The Gouvernement of Cattell* (London: 1587) 5.

*The Dissemination of Information and Advice
on the Health of Horses*

Husbandmen and others could obtain information about the health and illness of horses in a variety of ways. The oldest, and probably most common, type of dissemination was by word of mouth, followed by written and printed materials. Far from being separate entities, these three forms of spreading information both 'coexisted' and 'interacted' throughout the early modern period.⁵⁶ The wide range of surviving contemporary written and printed sources clearly illustrate the point. In some cases they could be said to 'transcribe' the spoken word and in others to heighten its exposure'.⁵⁷ While this holds true for both manuscripts and printed works, there was a vast difference between the periods before and after the advent of mechanical printing in the late fifteenth century. Beforehand, most medical information was disseminated orally. Peter Murray Jones has suggested that before 1375 the relatively small numbers of manuscript texts being produced would have restricted their circulation to a select group of highly educated readers of Latin. That said, by the latter part of the middle ages veterinary practitioners could draw on a growing number of more rudimentary English language texts.⁵⁸

According to one historian, the earliest writings on the care of horses date to the thirteenth century 'age of chivalry'. Although the death of horses during war was an on-going problem, Karasszon suggests that the losses reached unprecedented numbers during the Crusade of 1228–29. As a result, Frederick II instructed his mareschal, Giordano Rufo (alternatively referred to as Ruffus, Ruffo or Russo), to produce *Medicina Equorum* in 1250. The manual, based on 'observation, tradition and analogy' mixed with 'practical therapy', contained relatively new material. Although the original has not survived, numerous copies

⁵⁶ Sherman W.H., *John Dee: The politics of reading and writing in the English Renaissance* (Worcester, MA: 1995) 140.

⁵⁷ Fox A., *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: 2000) 5.

⁵⁸ Jones P.M., "Medicine and Science", in Hellinga L. – Trapp J.B. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. III (Cambridge: 1991) 433; Voigts L.E. – McVaugh M.R., "A Latin Technical Phlebotomy and Its Middle English Translation", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new ser. 74, 2 (1984) 1–69.

exist, including versions in Latin, Italian, Sicilian, German, French and one in Hebrew.⁵⁹

Frederick Smith also noted the importance of an early fourteenth century writer named Laurence Ruffus. Living about sixty years after the more famous Ruffus, Ruffus was thought to have served as a 'Marshal of the City (Rome)'. Although much of his writing reproduces earlier works, Smith argued that it also contained original insights and advice. The popularity of the text can be seen in the number of surviving manuscript copies in Latin, Italian and Sicilian. It first appeared in print at the end of the fifteenth century as *The Book of Marescalcia* in Rome. Later editions were printed in French, German and Italian.⁶⁰ Another highly reproduced contemporary text can be translated as the *Little Book of Horse Remedies*, written by the German farrier, Master Albrecht. Based on both experiments and theoretical knowledge, this became highly popular. There are over two hundred known manuscript copies of this work and an even larger number of (later) printed versions.⁶¹

Printed Veterinary Texts

The advent and spread of mechanical printing from the late fifteenth century onwards marked a major breakthrough in the transmission and dissemination of all types of knowledge. For the first time, large numbers of identical images could be produced quickly and cheaply and distributed nationally. Topics such as health, medicine and diet proved to be particularly popular and resulted in a wide range of publications which targeted all segments of the literate public. In addition to texts on human health, many were also published on veterinary care. The earliest included Pliny's *Historia naturalis* (1469), followed by works by Petrus Aponensis, Avicenna and Hippocrates.⁶²

What is believed to be the first printed work on horsemanship appeared in Spain in 1495, followed by three Italian publications in 1499, 1517 and 1518.⁶³ Such texts on animal health were extremely

⁵⁹ Karasszon, *Concise History* 175–178; Smith F., *Early history of veterinary literature and its British development* (London: 1976) vol. I, 78.

⁶⁰ Smith, *Veterinary Literature* vol. I, 92–98.

⁶¹ Cuneo P., "Beauty and the Beast", *Journal of Early History* 4 (2000) 269–321.

⁶² Karasszon, *Concise History* 232.

⁶³ Thirsk J., *The Rural Economy of England* (London: 1984) 389.

popular and have been credited with marking 'the end of ignorance' in veterinary literature.⁶⁴ However, this assertion is somewhat misleading, given that the majority of early printed books were simply translations of earlier manuscripts. The works of Vegetius (fifth century A.D.), often lauded as 'the father of veterinary medicine', were first printed around 1530 in Basle. Vegetius's compilation explained the important role that hygiene played in animal health care and discussed how to diagnose and treat a wide range of diseases in horses and other types of working animals.⁶⁵ Horses, however, were the focus of the *Hippiatrica* (fifth or sixth century A.D.), which also appeared in print during the early sixteenth century. This was an encyclopaedic collection of excerpts from seven late classical veterinary manuals, which focused on practical treatments of a range of diseases still found in horses today. It also included information on other aspects of equine care, including how to breed, break, feed, groom and stable horses. A recent book by Anne McCabe suggests that the earliest material found in the work can be traced to the fourteenth century B.C. cuneiform found at Ras Shamra-Ugarit in Syria.⁶⁶ As with a large number of other early texts, the *Hippiatrica* is known from later, rather than from contemporary, copies. The popularity of this text is illustrated by the numerous copies that were produced throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and succeeding centuries, and distributed throughout England and the Continent.⁶⁷ Frederico Grisone's *Gli ordini da cavalcare* (1550) was also widely reproduced, both in the original Italian and in numerous translations. The first German translation appeared in 1566, followed by what Johann Fayser von Arnstain claimed was the first 'complete' edition in 1570. In England, Thomas Blundeville produced an edited translation in 1560, stating in the preface that his purpose was to 'reduce Grysones booke [...] into a more briefe and compendious waye of teaching'.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Smith, *Veterinary Literature*, vol. I, 121.

⁶⁵ Vegetius Flavius Renatus, *The four bookes of Flavius Vegetius Renatus*, transl. J. Sadler (London, Thomas Marshe: 1572) fol. C1v; Wilkinson L., "Veterinary cross-currents in the history of ideas on infectious diseases", *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 73 (1980) 818–826; Smith, *Veterinary Literature*, vol. I, 26–27.

⁶⁶ McCabe A., *A Byzantine Encyclopedia of Horse Medicine: The Sources, Compilation, and Transmission of the Hippiatrica* (Oxford: 2007) 1, 2–4, 15.

⁶⁷ Smith F., *Veterinary Literature*, vol. I, 42–43.

⁶⁸ Cuneo P., "Hippology and Horsemanship in Early Modern Germany", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Early Modern Zoology: The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts*, *Intersections* 7 (2007), vol. II, 339–350;

There is some question as to when the first vernacular text on health care for horses was published in England. In the early part of the twentieth century, Frederick Smith suggested that this was *Medicines for Horses*, printed in the late fifteenth century. Modern scholars now believe that the sole copy held at Trinity College Cambridge was actually printed around 1565.⁶⁹ There is, however, an earlier work shelved at the Henry Huntington Library in California. The slim volume entitled *Here begynneth the propeytees and medcynes for hors* is thought to have been published in 1502. Divided into two sections, the first offers advice on how to recognise a 'gode hors' alongside tips on 'how to make an old hors seem yonge' and 'to make a hors folowe his mayster'. The second section is on 'medcynes' with information on how to treat a range of disorders.⁷⁰

Thomas Blundeville was one of the most successful writers about horses in the sixteenth century.⁷¹ Five years after his loose translation of Grisone's manual in 1560 he published *Fower Chiefest Offices Belonging to Horsemanshippe*, which reproduced his first book but added extra sections, containing information that he had gleaned from other authors on topics such as preventative and remedial medicine. The fact that it became the 'most reprinted popular text of the sixteenth century' suggests that there was a great demand for that sort of work.⁷² Other late sixteenth century English writers include Christopher Clifford and Leonard Mascall. Clifford's *The Schole of Horsemanship* first appeared in print in 1585. He claimed that his work was based on his thirty years experience with horses and working as or with the 'Breeder, the Rider, Keeper, and the Sadler, of the Horseleach and Smith'. Leonard Mascall, on the other hand, had a much wider interest in agricultural enterprises. The author of several books, his first manual devoted exclusively to animals appeared in 1587. *The First Booke of Cattel* (which was the generic name for working animals)

Blundeville Thomas, *A new booke containing the arte of ryding and breaking greate horses* (London: 1561) fol. A4r.

⁶⁹ Smith, *Veterinary Literature*, vol. I, 142–144.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, *Here begynneth the propeytees and medcynes for hors* (London: 1502).

⁷¹ Raber K., "Nation and Race in Horsemanship Treatises", in Raber K. – Tucker T.J. (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline and Identity in the Early Modern World* (Basingstoke: 2005) 225–243.

⁷² Blundeville Thomas, *The Fower Chiefyst Offices Belonging to Horsemanship* (London, Silliam Seres: 1565) fols. A1r–A3r; Raber K., "Nation and Race" 225–243.

included a section 'of the gouernment of Horses, with the approued remedies against most diseases'.⁷³

Thomas de Grey used a different method in his popular *The Compleat Horse-man and Expert Ferrier*, portraying himself as a knowledgeable gentleman-farmer, who was interested in breeding horses. His book claimed to offer 'a formall Examen of the office of the Ferrier'. Written in the form of questions and answers between characters named Hyppiatus and Hypposerus, it provided an exposition of the author's view that the farrier's art 'principally consists of foure things, to wit, Science, Experience, Knowledge, and Handy-worke'.⁷⁴ While 'science' might be learned from books, this quote emphasises how it had to be combined with applied knowledge gained from other farriers and practical experience over time.

The most prolific and best known English early modern writer about health care for horses was Gervase Markham. Although he claimed many years' experience as a veterinary practitioner, his actual career was much more varied. As a young man, Markham served as a soldier in the Low Countries, then as a captain under Essex in Ireland. He appears to have been fluent in Latin, French, Spanish, Italian and possibly Dutch. In 1616 he 'reviewed, corrected, and augmented' the translation done by Richard Surfllet of *Maison Rustique, or, the countrey farme* by Charles Stevens and John Liebault.⁷⁵ Markham also wrote a number of books on health care for other 'beasts of burden', which were called *veterena* in Latin, the root word of *veterinär* in German and of *veterinary* in English.⁷⁶ These included *Cheape and Good Husbandry* 'For the well-Ordering of all Beasts, and Fowles, and for the generall Cure of their Diseases'. Other titles, which often seemed to recycle the same material, promised to contain advice on health care for all animals 'fit for the vse of man'.⁷⁷

Markham was known to have copied from Blundeville's *The arte of rydinge*,⁷⁸ a tradition that continued with writers such as Robert Almond, who confessed that 'I owe much to my famous Countrey

⁷³ Clifford Christopher, *The schoole of horsmanship* (London, Thomas Cadman: 1585) fol. A3v; Mascall Leonard, *The Government of Cattle* (London: 1587) 97.

⁷⁴ de Grey, *The Compleat Horse-man and Expert Ferrier*, 2nd book 35.

⁷⁵ Mullett C.F., "Gervase Markham: Scientific Amateur", *ISIS* 35, 2 (1944) 106–118.

⁷⁶ Baranski A., *Geschichte der Thie.rzucht und Thiermedizin* (Vienna: 1886) 17.

⁷⁷ Markham Gervase. *Cheape and Good Husbandry* (London, Roger Jackson: 1616) fol. A1r; Markham, *Way to Get Wealth* fol. A1r.

⁷⁸ Dunlop R. – Williams D., *Veterinary History – An Illustrated History* (Chicago: 1996) 266.

men Mr Blondevil, Mr Markham and Mr LeGrey, for that great light and knowledge'.⁷⁹ It has been suggested that his books targeted and were read by a 'thrifty, rural, middle class audience',⁸⁰ an assertion that is supported by the promises Markham made in many of his books. *Markhams Methode, or Epitome*, for example, claimed to provide remedies for 'all diseases whatsoever, incident to horses and this almost 300. All cured with twelve medicines only'. It also contained advice on how to rid cattle of diseases with seven medicines, sheep with six medicines and dogs with only three medicines.⁸¹ These works continued to sell long after his (unpublicised) death in 1637 and, in the 1676 version of one of his books, the introduction states that '[I] have now found out the infallible way of curing all diseases in Cattle'.⁸²

The most accessible form of information and advice, however, appear in cheap, annual almanacs. In some cases, the material in almanacs may have served more as a reminder of the correct times of year for carrying out certain procedures than as a primary health guide. Nonetheless, many editions also contained more detailed advice in the form of preventative or remedial recipes, or warnings about forthcoming astral phenomena that might affect the health of animals. Although they were very small publications, most provided at least some rudimentary information on how to deal with sick animals. One title focused exclusively on horses. *Veterinarium Meteorologist Astrology: or, the Farriers Almanac* was written by Robert Gardner, who claimed to be a 'Student in Astrology and the compleat Art of Far-rying'. Although it has proved impossible to find a surviving copy of his 1697 edition, his preface from the following year states that it had contained 'an Account of several Famous Medicines to prevent and cure many Diseases in Horses'. Interestingly, although he called himself a farrier, the sole surviving edition of 1698 offered an 'account of several Famous medicines to Prevent and Cure many of the most Pestilential Diseases in Bullocks, Hogs, Sheep or any sort of Cattle' based on a combination of the wisdom of 'many good Authors and my own experience'.⁸³ Unfortunately, while Gardner also promised to pro-

⁷⁹ Almond, *Horsman*, fol. A3r.

⁸⁰ Wall W., "Renaissance National Husbandry: Gervase Markham and the Publication of England", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27, 3 (1996) 767–785.

⁸¹ Markham Gervase, *Markham's Faithfull Farrier* (London, M. Sparke, Junior: 1638) and *Markhams Methode, or Epitome* (London, R. Jackson: 1616) 26, 37, 51.

⁸² Markham, *A Way to Get Wealth* (London, George Sawbridge: 1676) fol. A1r.

⁸³ Gardner R., *Veterinarium Meteorologist Astrology: or, the Farriers Almanac* (London: 1698) fols. A1r, A2r, A2v–7v.

vide an even more 'detailed discourse' about horses for the following year, it does not appear that any copies of this edition have survived.

Conclusion

According to contemporary thought, early modern animals existed solely to serve human purposes. It was substantiated by numerous Biblical references which declared that animals had been put on earth to satisfy the needs of humankind, whether for labour, food or aesthetic reasons.⁸⁴ Different animals might fulfil one or more of these functions: oxen, for instance, provided muscle-power and food. While prehistoric horses may have been eaten, by the early modern period their role was limited to the work they could carry out, whether for transport, riding, sporting activities or iconic display.

As this chapter has shown, there was a great deal of interest in and concern for the health of horses in early modern England. Considering the praise and love heaped on these 'noble beasts', it is hardly surprising that from Roman times they were the major focus of writers on animal health care. The foremost 'benefit' would probably be economic and it goes against common sense to suggest that a society could be unconcerned about whether animals were in a fit state to work and/or produce food. A range of social and cultural reasons also contributed to the desire to look after the health of domesticated animals. Of particular importance was the Biblical injunction that 'A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.'⁸⁵ It also seems likely that many people grew emotionally attached to the animals they lived and worked with in such close proximity. As Edwards has pointed out, elite horses were valued for their 'social, economic and cultural benefits'.⁸⁶ I would argue, however, that the major concern for most horses was more plebeian and rested on their economic worth. After all, horses were extremely expensive animals to purchase and maintain, and were only a valuable commodity when fit and healthy. Losing horses to ill health was a luxury that few owners could afford.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Maehle A.H., "'The Ethical Discourse on Animal Experimentation'", in Wear A. *et al.* (eds.), *Doctors and Ethics: The Earlier Historical Setting of Professional Ethics* (Amsterdam: 1993) 204; Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* 19.

⁸⁵ Wilkinson, *Animals and Disease* 10; *Proverbs* 12:10.

⁸⁶ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 22, 32.

⁸⁷ Physiologus, *Country-man's Companion* fol. A2r.

There were a variety of medical options for animals, many of which could be purchased in the medical marketplace, while others could be made or administered in a domestic setting. The most expensive option would have been to hire a member of the Company of Farriers, who operated within London and a seven mile radius. In the countryside, owners could hire, according to income, a provincial farrier. Such a man was likely to have learned his craft through a formal or informal apprenticeship. However, the actual form of training was probably of less interest to potential clients than the man's experience and reputation. There were other types of 'commercial' horse healers, who might be known as a 'horse doctor' or 'horse leech'. Others, such as blacksmiths or horse trainers, who worked in close proximity to horses, were also often able to provide health-related services. There is also a great deal of supporting evidence in popular veterinary texts, as well as in manuscript sources, that lay-healers played a major role in helping to prevent or treat illness in horses.

While it is clear that most people felt a responsibility to maintain the health of their animals, it is not always possible to ascertain how they obtained the necessary medical advice. Before the advent of mechanical printing in the late fifteenth century, such information could have been passed on either through written manuscripts or through the oral culture. However, given the high cost and limited distribution of manuscripts, it seems likely that much of the medical knowledge in the public sphere was transmitted orally. It might then have found its way into handwritten household books, correspondence or journals. With the advent of printing, a great deal of printed information on veterinary care became widely available in the form of vernacular medical books and ephemeral literature such as almanacs. Despite the stereotype that few potential healers were literate, the presence of such amounts of printed information suggests otherwise. Many works dealt either exclusively or mainly with the health of horses. In the words of Gervase Markham, this simply confirmed the fact that, 'a horse is a beast of a most excellent vnderstanding and of a more rare and pure sence than anie other beast whatsoever [...]'.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Markham, *Cauelarice*, Eighth Book 20.

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“DARK HORSES”:
THE HORSE IN AFRICA IN THE SIXTEENTH
AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES¹

Sandra Swart

The wild desert horses of the Sahara were admired by the Renaissance era Moorish diplomat, al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al Fasi, who travelled under the sobriquet ‘Leo Africanus’.² He described how Muslim horsemen trapped these elusive creatures near their water source with snares concealed in the sand. The meat of captured horses was sometimes eaten – the younger the foal, the sweeter the meat – but the horses usually escaped capture in the vastness of the wilderness. Feral horses haunted other liminal and inaccessible areas from the Sudan to the upper Niger. Travellers reported sightings on the outskirts of human habitation, from free-roaming herds in the desert to curious inbred dwarf ponies dwelling deep in the forests of West Africa. Some reports can be dismissed as the embroidery characteristic of travellers’ tales but enough evidentiary fabric exists to suggest a long shared history of horses and humans. This chapter wishes to shed some shafts of light onto these ‘dark horses’. The first point is that the horses of Africa are dark in the sense of being largely unknown, cast in the shade of global histories of the horse. Evidence of these horses is sparse and mystery surrounds them, which has engendered lively debate. Secondly, it suggests that these horses are dark in that they have been historiographically caricatured, too often seen as instruments only of Muslim or later European imperialism and external aggression, as will be highlighted in the case study of the Oyo Empire.³ Finally, the horses’ role is examined in a dark chapter, as instruments

¹ Many thanks to Pete Edwards for the inspiration and scrupulous editing.

² Africanus Leo, *The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things therein contained*, ed. R. Brown (London: 1896), III 942–943. Muslims in Africa rarely ate horsemeat, as it was purportedly taboo under Maliki law.

³ As Legassick has cautioned, neither ‘state’ nor ‘empire’ are perfect descriptions of many regimes. However, ‘empire’ is used to mean a relatively large regime which included peoples of diverse cultural traditions. Legassick M., “Firearms, Horses and Samorian Army Organization 1870–1898”, *Journal of African History* 7, 1 (1966) 95.

in slaving, as part of a history of violence and terror, in which both humans and the horses themselves suffered.

The Fellow Passengers

In West and Central Africa, horses always had three sets of passengers: humans, tsetse fly and the trypanosomes they carried in turn. The first rode them to probable peril in battle but the second two rode them to certain death. Tsetse flies (*Glossina* sp.) carried the parasites or trypanosomes that transmitted 'sleeping sickness' (also called *nagana* or trypanosomiasis) to the victim.⁴ These were transmitted by the bite of infected flies and then multiplied in the blood and tissue fluids of their hosts, both human and animal.⁵ In wild animals, which had co-evolved with the disease, these parasites caused relatively weak infections but in domesticated animals they caused severe, often fatal reactions. There was an unseen but palpable 'tsetse frontier'.⁶ In places of heavy *T. brucei* infestation, horses could succumb immediately, and in regions infested by the less virulent *T. vivax* and *T. congolense*,

⁴ The always endemic disease periodically flared up vigorously because of population changes in its vector, the tsetse fly. For example, *nagana* in Sierra Leone in the mid-nineteenth century extinguished the equine population, rendering re-establishment almost impossible. The explorer Mary Kingsley noted that imported horses died quickly, fuelling rumours that the hammock-carrying porters had poisoned them, although she gave more credence to parasites as more likely cause of death. Kingsley M., *Travels in West Africa* (London: 1904) 19. See Dorward D.C. – Payne A.I., "Deforestation, the Decline of the Horse, and the Spread of the Tsetse Fly and Trypanosomiasis (*nagana*) in Nineteenth Century Sierra Leone", *Journal of African History* 16, 2 (1975) 239. See also Fyfe C., *A History of Sierra Leone* (Oxford: 1962) 294.

⁵ African animal trypanosomiasis or *nagana* is caused by *T. congolense*, *T. vivax* and *T. brucei* spp. See also Steverding D., "The history of African trypanosomiasis", *Parasites and Vectors* 1, 3 (2008), 1, 3. Shifting wetter and dryer periods have altered the tsetse fly belt; consequently climate shifts meant changing the geography of horse survival and thus impacted on state building. See Brooks G., *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in West Africa, 1000–1630* (Boulder: 1993); Ford J., *The Role of Trypanosomiasis in African Ecology: a Study of the Tsetse Fly Problem* (Oxford: 1971); Webb J., *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change along the Western Sahel, 1600–1850* (Madison: 1995).

⁶ The frontier fluctuated with climate change. Courtin F. et al., "Sleeping sickness in West Africa (1906–2006): changes in spatial repartition and lessons from the past", *Tropical Medicine and International Health* 13, 3 (2008) 334–344; McCann J., "Climate and Causation in African History", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 32, 2/3 (1999) 261–279.

they could suffer lethargy, emaciation and paralysis. This created an extremely hostile environment for the horses imported to the area.⁷

Mounting Evidence

Horses are generally discussed as though a recent medieval import usually by Muslim horse dealers, but it is becoming clear that they may have a history in West Africa over a *longue durée*. Some contend that certain types of horses might well have been there since the Neolithic period.⁸ Certainly, a strong case exists that the arrival of the horse in the Sudan long preceded the arrival of Islam. It has been argued that the horse arrived in north Africa up the Nile valley, into the Sudan and across the Sahara to the Niger. In this way, incoming desert pastoralists were able to build up larger, militant states, as the Zaghawa did in Kanem.⁹ But the horse's presence may extend much further back. A single equid tooth from Nigeria has been dated to 2000 BP. Admittedly, archaeozoological remains are difficult to interpret as they are hard to distinguish from the osteological remains of zebras.¹⁰ Archaeological excavations of equestrian accoutrements suggest that the Hyksos brought horses to Egypt and remains dating to 1,675 BC have been found. To turn from physical remains to textual evidence, classical and Arabic sources provide scattered allusion. In the first century AD, the Greek geographer Strabo, for example, remarked on the Nubians riding bare-back on their steeds.¹¹ Arab intellectuals alluded

⁷ As the illness progresses, the animals weakened – hence “nagana” from the Nguni word for “depressed” or “useless”. Aside from nagana, there were other equine diseases including glanders, piroplasmiasis, lymphangitis, and strangles. Even for the home-grown horses of the upper Senegal-Niger basin, in the early twentieth century the normal lifespan was a measly eight years. Webb J., “The Horse and Slave Trade between the Western Sahara and Senegambia”, *The Journal of African History* 34, 2 (1993) 221–246.

⁸ Blench R., “Ethnographic and linguistic evidence for the prehistory of African ruminant livestock, horses and ponies”, in Shaw T. *et al.*, (eds.), *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns* (London: 1993).

⁹ The Kanem Empire originated in the ninth century A.D. to the northeast of Lake Chad. Fage J.D., *The Cambridge history of Africa II* (Cambridge: 1978/2002) 681. See Fisher H.J., “‘He Swalloweth the Ground with Fierceness and Rage’: The Horse in the Central Sudan. I.” *The Journal of African History* 13, 3 (1972) 367–388.

¹⁰ Clutton-Brock J., “The Spread of domestic animals in Africa”, in Shaw *et al.*, *Archaeology of Africa* 61–70.

¹¹ Strabo, *Geographia*, transl. H.L. Jones (London: 1932) XVII, 3.

to the horses they encountered: for example, one noted in 1154 AD that the ruler of Ghana tethered his horse with a gold brick. Aside from such excesses, what is particularly striking is the casual nature of the reference to horses; it was clearly not considered extraordinary that horses were present – it is the gold brick not the horse that raised eyebrows – which suggests a long historical presence in the area.¹²

The horse may have become established well before the coming of those nomadic aggressors with whom it is often associated. In this regard, mapping rock paintings, engravings and representations of horses have proved helpful. Their path across the Sahara can be traced by following the portraits they left behind.¹³ Yet, these depictions are sparse and, as a commentator noted, one cannot assume a profusion of equines from these depictions but instead the reverse. Indeed, horses were probably drawn because of their rarity and the wonder their strange appearance excited, ‘just as an historian would be ill-advised who deduced from a British commemorative stamp that Concordes were [once] a common feature of our transport’.¹⁴

Routes and Roots

Whenever the date of their first arrival, horses came initially from across the Sahara, breaking through the tsetse barrier, penetrating as far as the disease-ridden marshes of the Sudan and throughout the safer savannahs of West Africa.¹⁵ They were used in warfare in the Sudan since the ninth century and in West Africa since the eleventh century, under Muslim Berber rule. During the two centuries that followed, cavalry increased in significance: larger breeds of horses were introduced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and, most significantly, saddles and stirrups were adopted widely.

In the forest-belt, evidence is more scattered and sparse. Where there are few written reports or even graphic depictions, both oral tra-

¹² For detailed discussion see Blench, “Ethnographic and linguistic evidence” 18–27.

¹³ Mauny R., “Trans-Saharan Contacts and the Iron Age in West Africa”, in Fage, *Cambridge History of Africa*, II 272–341.

¹⁴ Quoted in Fisher, “‘He Swalloweth the Ground’” 373. In fact, there has even been suggestion that the horses were copied from Roman circus mosaics. Davies O., *West Africa before the Europeans* (London: 1967) 27.

¹⁵ Here ‘horse’ refers also to ponies.

dition and historical (diachronic) linguistic analysis have been useful. Oral tradition has further assisted in reconstructing horse types and uses. It offers several origin-narratives that refer to bands of stranger horsemen as founders of states or peoples. Moreover, the dispersal of linguistic roots of equine nomenclature correlates with the diverse polyphyletic origins of the West African ponies, suggesting that they arrived along distinct and different trade routes.¹⁶ What is increasingly clear is the sheer diversity of horses, usually not disaggregated by Africanist historians. Most historians, who do mention horses, tend to work on the assumption that the horses were of one type and functionally alike. In fact, horse types were (and are) abundant, and, moving from west to east, became vernacularly understood as: *Cayar*, *M'par*, *M' Bayar*, *Koniakar*, *Bobo*, *Minianka*, *Kaminiaandougou*, *Songhai*, *Torodi*, *Kotokoli*, *Kirdi/Laka*, *Kordofani*, *Borana*, and *Somali*.¹⁷

Moreover, there may indeed be more than simply legend in the stories of a breed of dwarf horses inhabiting the forests. Later travellers passing through Yoruba country commented on the tiny stature of the horses, describing them as the size of Shetland ponies.¹⁸ A convincing case can be made that dwarf horses evolved from early horse stock that became feral over the last two (or more) millennia.¹⁹ Breeding populations endemic to insular environments are sometimes significantly smaller (or occasionally larger) than their more broad-based, cosmopolitan sister-populations. Insular Dwarfism or *nanism* is an evolutionary result of inbreeding in adverse, isolated conditions: large animals develop a smaller size as an adaptation to their environment. This most often happens on islands or ecologically remote areas, like forests, where food may be in shorter supply or the thick foliage gives

¹⁶ Blench, "Ethnographic and linguistic evidence" 93.

¹⁷ The most useful, wide-ranging and detailed reviews of horse breeds in Africa are Epstein and, more recently, Blench. They distinguish the west African types from the Barb, Dongola and Arab or "Oriental" horses of North Africa. Epstein H., *The Origin of the Domestic Animals of Africa II* (New York: 1971) and Blench, "Ethnographic and linguistic evidence for the prehistory of African ruminant livestock, horses and ponies" 88–103.

¹⁸ Hugh Clapperton made two journeys into the interior of West Africa, the first across the Sahara Desert and the second inland from the Bight of Benin. Clapperton H., *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccato*. (London: 1828) 56, 34; Burton R.F., *Abeokuta and the Camaroons Mountains: an Exploration I* (London, 1863) 61; 68.

¹⁹ Blench, "Ethnographic and linguistic evidence" 88; Law R., *The Horse in West African History* (Oxford: 1980).

smaller creatures an advantage. It has also been observed in animals genetically cut off from the rest of their species.²⁰ The diminutive horses came to co-exist with wild pygmy hippopotami and elephants and with domesticated dwarf taurine.

Like the taurine, these equines almost certainly developed a measure of trypanotolerance. Even if they did not develop dwarfism *per se* but were simply undersized ponies which had been in the area for millennia, evidence suggests they built up a resistance to local pathogens.²¹ Even if they did succumb to *nagana*, the smaller horses also had reduced susceptibility to the effects of the infection because of a number of physiological factors which aided survival, including more effective use of meagre food resources. Where food intake was marginal, as it was in the area under discussion, animals with lower maintenance needs also suffered less from disease.²² So, it is likely that smaller, trypanotolerant pony breeds with much lower inherent maintenance requirements were better adapted to the pathogen environments of West and Central Africa.

Knowing nothing of these scientific reasons but simply observing their striking survival rate, Leo Africanus was struck by the hardness of these ponies. He suggested that only these 'small horses' could be bred successfully in the region. He observed that larger horses had to be imported continuously to fuel the needs of the Songhai Empire. These 'small horses' or ponies were ridden bareback with a bitless bridle. There were other local adaptations, some of which persisted,

²⁰ Body-size decrease is actually widespread within multiple clades of fossil horses. See Gould S.J., "Speciation and sorting as the source of evolutionary trends, or 'things are seldom what they seem.'", in McNamara K.J. (ed.), *Evolutionary trends* (London - Tucson: 1990) 3-27. In horses, as in any large animals, genetic makeup there is always the possibility of dwarf progeny by mutation. In some specific situations, dwarf animals would out-compete their more generously proportioned counterparts, requiring fewer resources, and therefore more liable to pass on their dwarf gene to successive offspring. For discussion see MacFadden B.J., "Fossil horses from 'Eohippus'" (*Hyracotherium*) to *Equus*: scaling, Cope's law, and the evolution of body size", *Paleobiology* 12, 4 (1987) 355-369; MacFadden B.J., *Fossil horses: systematics, paleobiology, and evolution of the family Equidae* (Cambridge: 1992).

²¹ Specifically, the N'Dama and the West African Shorthorn. The taurine Hamitic longhorn, from which the N'Dama is descended, first arrived from the Near East c.5,000 BC, while the taurine Shorthorn cattle were introduced 2 500 years later. Murray M. *et al.*, "Trypanotolerant livestock: Potential and future exploitation", *Outlook on Agriculture* 13, 1 (1984).

²² Frisch J.E. - Vercoe J.E., "Utilizing breed differences in growth of cattle in the tropics", *World Animal Review* 25 (1978) 8-12.

like some riders cutting their steeds' backs and 'gluing' themselves to them in blood. Repeated mutilation could also form a calloused hard pad, creating a kind of natural organic saddle out of the horse's own body.²³ This was the sub-Saharan horsemanship equestrian tradition described, for example, by the very first Muslim travellers to the kingdoms of Ghana, Gao and Kanem.²⁴ It was only overtaken or, arguably supplemented, by a second equestrian tradition in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This was the period when the Muslim rulers of the larger sub-Saharan states on pilgrimages witnessed the cavalry techniques used to the north of the desert. This tradition became predicated on the continuous importation of larger horses – Arab and Barbary types – and new equestrian attire: bits, saddles, and stirrups for the horses and armour for the humans.

Those horses bred in northern areas of western Sudan tended to weaken with southward shift. Below eleven degrees north latitude the average lifespan for a horse was only two years.²⁵ As a result, breeding in the south was not viable and a north-to-south trade in horses remained essential. Throughout this period the smaller, locally adapted ponies remained significant in certain areas. Ponies continued to thrive in certain regions, like the Jos Plateau, throughout the period of the purported domination of the larger horses. Ponies were used in a variety of non-military ways: for hunting, as packhorses and for cross-breeding with horses. They also had a key role as a carrier of information to, and instructions from, central government.²⁶ Yet in historical accounts these ponies have been overshadowed, quite literally, by the prestigious 'high horses' imported later in the medieval period.

Horses, History and Historians

Historians have long wrestled with the entangled role of horses and the nature of power in human society.²⁷ This interest dates back to Aristotle's observation on the connection between oligarchy and

²³ Blench, "Ethnographic and linguistic evidence" 96.

²⁴ The earliest Hausa states – the most powerful of which were Ghana, Gao and Kanem – stretched across the western and central Sudan.

²⁵ Law, *The Horse in West African History* 44.

²⁶ Wilks I., *The Asante in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: 1975) 41.

²⁷ For an exploration of similar themes in the southern African context, see Swart S. *Riding High – Horses, Humans and History in South Africa* (Johannesburg: 2010).

cavalry.²⁸ Accordingly, the horse has received attention from a generation of Africanists, particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s, grappling with the fundamental question: the nature of power of the African state. The pioneering research of Jack Goody, Humphrey Fisher and Robin Law was key to an understanding of the use of horses in West Africa and the Sudan, and this, in turn, stimulated a vigorous historiographical debate over the very essence of the cavalry state.²⁹

Goody underlined the significance of horses in the post medieval savannah states of West Africa. His argument was that these societies depended far less on control of the means of production than on the 'means of destruction'. As a key instrument of war, horses functioned as one of these instruments of violence. Horsemen maintained themselves by protection-payments and plunder. The plunder was often human. Horses were used specifically for the predatory pillaging of slaves for export. They were used more generally in state warfare, which also produced prisoners of war for sale into the Atlantic, Saharan and North African markets. Cavalry thus became a key instrument for slave-raiding and war-lording.³⁰ In turn, in this vicious circle, slaves were themselves the primary commodity traded for horses. This imported horse-exported slave cycle was pervasive in some, but not all, savannah states. As noted above, these imported horses did not live long in the savannah and, by the same token, slave mortality within the desert and on the trans-Saharan crossing was very high. Thus, the ever-hungry horse and slave trades fed upon one another.

²⁸ Of course, Aristotle has been wrong before – particularly about equines – he thought that mules might be able to give birth in their seventh year.

²⁹ Fisher, "He Swalloweth the Ground"; Goody J., *Technology, Tradition, and the State in Africa* (London: 1971); Law R., "Horses, Firearms, and Political Power in Pre-Colonial West Africa", *Past and Present* 72 (1976) 112–132 and *The Horse in West African History*; Legassick M., "Firearms, Horses and Samorian Army Organization 1870–1898", *The Journal of African History* 7, 1 (1966) 95–115; Webb J., "The Horse and Slave Trade between the Western Sahara and Senegambia", *The Journal of African History* 34, 2 (1993) 221–246. More recently Elbl and Webb added considerably to the picture. See Elbl I., "The Horse in Fifteenth-Century Senegambia", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24, 1 (1991) 85–110.

³⁰ In some areas, smaller ponies were the mainstay of rapid transport and larger, northern horses were merely kept for show. In others, the larger horses were continuously imported.

Horse States and Gun States

The age-old bows and arrows were easy to make and their raw materials were accessible – so they became the weapons of uncentralized, acephalous societies.³¹ However, with the introduction of metals, kingdoms became possible. Combining these iron weapons with the speed of horse-borne cavalry, created the conditions for the establishment of empires. The coastal states relied on firearms, whereas the savannah rulers were horsemen, whose main cavalry weapon was the lance.³² Fundamentally, Goody argued, there was a stark difference between the 'gun states' of the forest (where tsetse and trees offered pathogenic and physical barriers to horses' movement) and horse states of the savannahs. As a result, their socio-political systems differed.

In the savannahs, mass dynasties reigned. There, state power was diffused among the fighting cavalry. Horses were so expensive that small dynasties lacked the resources to provide mounts sufficient for state militaries. Thus, a more fluid system spread out among the cavalry elite, who buttressed the power of the state, riding on horses they imported themselves. Goody draws on the example of Gonja, established in the late sixteenth or early 17th century, founded by a group of Mande riders. They set up a state predicated on permanent plunder, against whom acephalous people had little defence.³³

In the forest, the state was more autocratic. Government remained more tightly in the grasp of a smaller dynasty, with stricter lineal succession, where primogeniture concentrated power. Leaders had command of the supply of guns coming into their states through the sea-borne trade. When military power depended on the gun (as opposed to the horse), kings required a much smaller ruling elite, relying on slaves rather than loyal 'knights'. Such kings, however, ruled in the constant shadow of a slave revolution.³⁴

This model (cavalry states with less centralized political organizations and mass dynasties, and gun states with a tendency towards more

³¹ Goody, *Technology, Tradition, and the State in Africa* 55.

³² The lance was probably usually used from the horse rather than dismounted.

³³ Another example is offered by the use of the horse in the fifteenth century as an instrument of war which played an important part in the establishment of the Mossi states, formed by conquering cavalry from Mamprusi. Echenberg J.M., "Late Nineteenth-Century Military Technology In Upper Volta", *Journal of African History* 12, 2 (1971) 241–254.

³⁴ Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition* 171–172.

centralized political structures) has educed an alternative explanation. Law has argued that small dynasties simply did not have the resources to maintain, rather than obtain, cavalry mounts. Horses could be stabled in urban centres but they necessitated a steady supply of fodder from the rural areas, and required a labour force larger than a single ruling family could afford. Hence the more diffuse sharing of responsibility – and power – among larger groups of nobles.³⁵

The neat – almost Aristotelian – model of oligarchies and cavalries is undermined by the fact that there was no necessary connection between cavalry and a hierarchical polity. The possession of horses did not in every case guarantee even the crudest form of state. The horse-raiders did not necessarily develop sophisticated political structures.³⁶ Equally, a relative absence of horses was evident in the formation of some complex states. In fact, several states actually emerged in reaction to raiding horsemen.³⁷ There is evidence to suggest that large groups of acephalous horsemen attacked settled agricultural people, who responded by actually centralizing in defence. Also, non-Muslim groups sometimes adopted the horse as resistance against organised slavers.³⁸ Blench has added another nuance by pointing out that many so-called horse-based armies were probably mounted on ponies.³⁹ Indeed, in some cases, as Fisher has argued, the larger, more delicate horse was more important as a signifier of status rather than as utilitarian technologies of war.⁴⁰ He maintains the long-distance trade in these luxury items across the Sahara was predicated on the use of horses as symbols of conspicuous consumption.

As a symbol of both wealth and power, the large horse was coveted. It was an object of desire from the savannah to the forest societies where it could survive only briefly and served little practical purpose.⁴¹ Cavalry was terrain-dependent; in wooded country cavalry could not be deployed for a charge and was liable to be ambushed while

³⁵ Law, *The Horse in West African History* 192.

³⁶ For parallels with acephalous, raiding bands in southern Africa, see Swart, *Riding High* 42–43.

³⁷ Blench, “Ethnographic and linguistic evidence” 101.

³⁸ For example, non-Muslims on the Jos plateau of northern Nigeria defended themselves against slavers.

³⁹ Blench, “Ethnographic and linguistic evidence for the prehistory of African ruminant livestock, horses and ponies” 92–94.

⁴⁰ Fisher, “He swalloweth the ground” 385.

⁴¹ Even the large horse was not large by European standards – probably under 15 hands.

moving along narrow paths. In the disease-ridden coastal kingdoms of Dahomey and Benin, for example, a small number of horses were cosseted into surviving so that they could be ridden on ceremonial occasions by principal chiefs. The equestrian arts were, however, so little known and these horses were so seldom ridden, that on these rare occasions the chiefs frequently had to be propped up by an entourage walking on either side of their mounts. In some southern states, where horses tended to die rapidly, sometimes only their tails were borne aloft to signal high rank. Often, it was a safer bet to beat *nagana* to the kill, by sacrificing rather than riding horses. Among the Igbo, the very wealthy boasted with ritualised horse-sacrifice in title-taking and funeral ceremonies.⁴² The horsemen of Oyo displayed their equestrian skills in festivals, and the slaughter of horses graced the great state ceremonies. (Indeed, even those intimately connected with horses were sometimes sacrificed. At royal funerals the bridle-holder of the king's horse was also expected to commit suicide.)⁴³ In Hausa tradition, a horse, especially a mare, was perhaps the most impressive gift that a wealthy man could bestow. Not only was the horse regarded with awe in this society but the mare had special value as a potential producer of foals. The recipient was placed in such debt to the benefactor that it could last for the rest of his life and maybe even those of his children.⁴⁴ The equation of horses with high rank and self-importance is apparent in Yoruba proverbs like 'one who mounts a horse has to come down'.⁴⁵ Thus, the horse served as that icon of conspicuous wealth, which was later supplanted by European artefacts such as the imported luxury car of the so-called *waBenzi* class.⁴⁶

⁴² Shaw T., *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria* (London: 1970) 193–195; 365–367; Sutton J.E.G., "Igbo-Ukwu and the Nile", *The African Archaeological Review* 18, 1 (2001) 56; Sutton J.E.G., "The antiquity of horses and asses in West Africa: A correction", *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1985) 117–118.

⁴³ Goody, *Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa* 2; Law, "A West African Cavalry State" 1.

⁴⁴ Duffill M.B., "Hausa Poems as Sources for Social and Economic History", *History in Africa* 13 (1986) 73.

⁴⁵ Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* 50; 44; 45; 55.

⁴⁶ Big Men, especially the politically connected elite in East Africa, have earned themselves the derisive Swahili epithet, "waBenzi" – or "the people of the Mercedes Benz". See Jacoby N. *et al.*, *Bribery and Extortion in World Business: A Study of Corporate Political Payments Abroad* (New York: 1977) 13.

Parallels of Plunder

Although horse prices did show a decrease from the fifteenth century right up until colonial times, horses remained expensive and only the wealthy elite could buy and then afford to take care of them.⁴⁷ Horse-soldiering required special training which further entrenched differences in the consciousness of elite identity. As discussed above, along with political claims to power, horse owners had claims to a singular social status. Just as in feudal Europe, war – and consequently metaphors of power – was dominated by cavalry. In other ways, there were discernible parallels and contrasts to the warfare of medieval Europe.⁴⁸ In both, the foot-stirrup was widely adopted but only light armour (unlike the heavy European armour) was worn, if worn at all, and lighter swords and spears/lances were carried.⁴⁹ Although frequently used in raids, horses often served as transport to war rather than always as an instrument used in battle itself. In both West and Central Africa and medieval Europe, the large war horse was probably seldom deployed in agriculture or ordinary goods transport. Other animals – camels, donkeys, ponies – were used for humbler modes of transport. Just as in the feudal period of pillage, across the Sahara and the northern Sudan incipient city-states hungry for power were fed by slave-villages policed and plundered by a high-born, horse-borne military class.

A Cavalry Kingdom

A horse-owning elite ruled the Oyo Empire, the largest of the Yoruba kingdoms in the savannah below the bend of the river Niger in south-west Nigeria.⁵⁰ Settlement in the area was already in evidence by c.1100 AD and it appears to have developed into a small kingdom by the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. It grew through a trade and tribute-based economy, buttressed by a powerful cavalry, under the

⁴⁷ Law, *The Horse in West African History*.

⁴⁸ Goody has outlined parallels between African cavalry and the feudal cavalry of Europe, *Technology, Tradition, and the State in Africa* 36–37.

⁴⁹ Davidson B., *The African Slave Trade* (Boston: 1961) 29.

⁵⁰ For a full description see Law R., "A West African Cavalry State: The Kingdom of Oyo", *The Journal of African History* 16, 1 (1975) 1–15.

alafins, members of a Yoruba-speaking dynasty. It reached its zenith during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but disintegrated in the early years of the nineteenth.⁵¹ A powerful thread throughout its rise was the reliance on horse power.⁵²

In fact, tradition maintains that horses played a part in the very foundation of Oyo.⁵³ It is said that a prince of the Yoruba Kingdom of Ile-Ife, Oranyan, and his brother agreed to launch a retaliatory raid on their northern neighbours for affronting their father, the king. On the way to the skirmish, the brothers quarrelled (as founder-of-empire brothers tend to do) and their army was cleaved in allegiance. Oranyan's force alone was insufficient for the planned onslaught, so, somewhat at a loss, he wandered until a local chief offered him hospitality. The chief advised Oranyan to track a giant snake bearing a supernatural talisman until it disappeared into the earth. Following this sound recommendation and concomitantly his ophidian guide, Oranyan founded Oyo at the very place where the serpent stopped. The name 'Oyo' was chosen – it was said – as meaning the "slippery place" where his horse stumbled.

To move from the mythic to the material, aside from a few military stumbles, Oyo grew into an inland power by the end of the 14th century and expanded increasingly at the expense of its neighbours. Even so, its rise did not go unchallenged: in 1535, for example, the Nupe occupied Oyo and forced its regnant dynasty to flee, toppling Oyo as a regional power.⁵⁴ Oyo then re-emerged as a serious imperial force and during the seventeenth century enjoyed a period of expansion, replete with tributary states like the Ewe and Aja states of modern Benin.⁵⁵ It was the most politically important state in the area from the later seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, holding sway not only over other Yoruba kingdoms but also over other kingdoms, like the Dahomey.

⁵¹ Agiri B.A., "Early Oyo History Reconsidered", *History in Africa* 2 (1975) 1–16.

⁵² Oyo never encompassed all Yoruba-speaking people but it was by far the most heavily populated kingdom in Yoruba history. Alpern S., *Amazons of Black Sparta: The Women Warriors of Dahomey* (New York: 1998) 37. For Yoruba traditions of origin, see Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* 3–4.

⁵³ Both Benin and Ife myths associate Oranyan with horses. See also Stride G.T. – Ifeka C., *Peoples and empires of West Africa* (New York: 1971) 290.

⁵⁴ Thornton J., *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: 1998) 77; Smith R., "The Alafin in exile: a study of the Igboho period in Oyo history", *Journal of African History* 6, 2 (1965) 59.

⁵⁵ Stride – Ifeka, *Peoples and empires of West Africa* 293.

The key to this second breath was the stronger military and a more centralized administration that Oyo adopted.

At its height, Oyo's borders reached to the coast 200 miles southwest of its capital and its imperial web exceeded 150,000 square kilometres.⁵⁶ The empire grew through the importation of horses from the Muslim North and the affluence achieved through controlling the north-south trade. Oyo became the southern hub of the Trans-Saharan trade in salt, leather, kola nuts, ivory, cloth and, of course, horses and slaves. It is unclear exactly where the Yoruba first obtained their horses: perhaps from Borgu, then Hausaland and Bornu, and tradition suggests that the trade was conducted through markets in Nupe.⁵⁷ There was a horse-slave trading cycle between northern horse-breeding areas and the southern horse-consuming areas in the sixteenth century. Slaves were seized and sold to buy more horses to make possible the capture of further slaves. In the seventeenth century, however, as Law has demonstrated, Oyo began to send slaves to the coast for sale to European traders, and by the late eighteenth century, far from exporting slaves northwards, Oyo was importing large numbers of slaves from the north for re-sale at the coast.

Oyo was the only Yoruba state to adopt cavalry. Arguably it did so, in part, because it was *able* to: most of its territory lay in the relatively disease-free northern savannah. Oyo was able to purchase horses from the north and maintain them in metropolitan Oyo because of partial freedom from the tsetse fly. In the south, the effects of the tsetse fly rendered breeding larger horses an unprofitable endeavour. Moreover, the Oyo could use horses in a way that was just not possible in thick forest.⁵⁸ Oyo could not maintain its cavalry army in the south but could raid at will to the north and southwest, areas easily negotiated by horses. Cavalry enabled them to launch campaigns of conquest and suppression over great distances. In this way, cavalry was the long, predatory arm of the state.

Johnson, a pioneering historian of the Yoruba, tells how, in the reign of Orompoto in the later 16th century, the cavalry tied *gbaju* leaves

⁵⁶ Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* 104.

⁵⁷ See Fisher, "He swalloweth the ground" 381; Ajayi J.F.A., "The aftermath of the fall of Old Oyo", in Ajayi J.F.A. – Crowder M. (eds.), *History of West Africa* (London, 1974) vol. II, 143.

⁵⁸ Wolf E., *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: 1982) 213.

to the tail of each horse to eradicate its tracks. As Fisher notes wryly, the notion that a body of horse over a thousand strong could thus conceal its tracks seems a trifle implausible.⁵⁹ The *gbaju* leaves might instead have had some supernatural significance or perhaps they were intended, by raising a great dust, to do the opposite of concealing tracks but rather give an exaggerated impression of the army's size (it is worth noting that *gbaju* 'e means "scam artist" in Yoruba idiom).

Horses were powerful but vulnerable creatures in the African context. Simply providing enough water for horses on deployment would have been a logistical nightmare. Moreover, their food (grass and durra/sorghum) had to be brought to them from the outlying areas by slaves.⁶⁰ Horses exercised some agency in adding to their own vulnerability. For example, in 1728, when the Oyo Empire invaded the Kingdom of Dahomey in a major and bitter campaign, the horseless Dahomey's firearms proved effective in repelling the Oyo cavalry.⁶¹ Moreover, horses feared camels and gun-fire, although both fears could be surmounted with training. Dahomey's army also built fortifications such as trenches, which forced the Oyo army to fight as infantry.⁶² Yoruba invaded Dahomey a total of seven times before the little kingdom was fully subjugated in 1748.⁶³ There were many ways to ambush a cavalry: pits could be dug and lined with spikes, and calabashes could be filled with bees and thrown as bombs.⁶⁴

Yet, the most effective weapon was both invisible and without agenda: the tsetse fly, which in the south caused a huge attrition rate among the horses. The tsetse frontier provided a porous but protective shield for some agricultural peoples against slave-raiding horsed warriors. The deleterious effects of the disease also compelled the *alafins* to ensure a strong trade of goods to the Muslim North. Many cavalry states were followers of Islam, from (modern) Senegal, Guinea and Mali in the east to Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria in the west, albeit with diverse and locally idiosyncratic techniques of horsemanship. There was, however, little, if any, Muslim influence in the early Oyo

⁵⁹ Fisher, 'He Swalloweth the Ground with Fierceness and Rage' 375.

⁶⁰ Slaves of northern origin, especially Hausa and Nupe, were horse carers, as they had more equine expertise than the local people.

⁶¹ Oliver R.A. (ed.) *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. III, c.1050–1600 (Cambridge: 1977) 237; Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* 82.

⁶² Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* 86.

⁶³ Alpern, *Amazons of Black Sparta* 165.

⁶⁴ Smith, "Warfare and diplomacy in pre-colonial West Africa" 76.

Empire, although Muslim grooms and equine experts were almost certainly imported along with horses themselves.⁶⁵

Metaphors of Mounting

Islam had penetrated Oyo society by the seventeenth century but ran up against a robust entrenched belief system, which had very different ideas about gender which – interestingly for this chapter – involved horses. As anthropologist J. Lorand Matory has argued, womanhood was mobilised as a metaphor intrinsic to the socio-political order.⁶⁶ Rather than suppressing women's sexuality as many Muslims tended to, Yoruba conceived of women's bodies and – more broadly – sexual relations as an expression royal power and a way of explaining how the state worked. This was partly articulated through equine metaphors. Sàngóism gained a hold as the state religion and the sculptural genre of the equestrian figure of a warrior-king on horseback accompanied its growth. This portrayal of the royal dynasty's patron god, Sàngó, reflected both his mortal life as a great horse-warrior, as well as his divine power.⁶⁷ A body of individuals (men and women) were designated the 'wives' of the king and of Sàngó.⁶⁸ Few were 'wives' in a western conventional sense. Instead, an ideology of suitable relations between king and subjects, husbands and wives were deployed as metaphors to define the submission of these 'wives' to royal command. To do so, the image of the horse was incorporated among the gendered metaphors of both imperial power and Sàngó faith. Just as horses were Oyo's main instruments of conquest, analogously, the king's possession priests were called 'mounts and horses' – *elegun* and *esin* – of Sàngó.⁶⁹ As Matory has shown, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was a tug-of-war over authority between the

⁶⁵ There were some Muslim Yoruba in Oyo, Smith R., *Kingdoms of the Yoruba* (Wisconsin: 1988) 123.

⁶⁶ Matory J.L., "Government by Seduction: History and the Tropes of 'Mounting' in Oyo-Yoruba Religion", in Comaroff J. and Comaroff J. (eds.), *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Africa* (Chicago: 1993) 58. See also Matory J.L., *Sex And The Empire That Is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyo Yoruba Religion* (Minneapolis: 1994) xix; xx; 133–179.

⁶⁷ See also Morton-Williams P., "Two Yoruba Brass Pillars", *African Arts* 28, 3 (1995) 60–61; 92.

⁶⁸ Johnson *The History of the Yorubas* 62; 63.

⁶⁹ For a thorough discussion of possession priests and their complex identities, see Matory, *Sex And The Empire* 133–225.

king of Oyo, the military leader, and the two councils of state. Royal servants called *Ilari*, many of whom were horsemen and whose very title suggested 'mounting' by the king's personal spirit, gave a boost to the authority of the king over the non-royal chiefs.⁷⁰ The allegorical juxtaposition of horses, wives, priests and royal authority remained powerful in postcolonial possession religions, despite challenges from other religions and changes in the political system in the nineteenth century as the empire declined and fragmented.⁷¹

The decline of Oyo was bound up with the decline of its cavalry, though the causality was not absolutely linear or one-way.⁷² By the nineteenth century, and even prior to the introduction of firearms, the roles of the cavalry had been reduced to those of harrying and reconnaissance. The trade route to the coast was difficult to control, especially in forested areas where cavalry was ineffective.⁷³ Certainly, one reason for the decline in the effectiveness of the military during the eighteenth century was the difficulty in acquiring horses.⁷⁴ Indeed, in the mid-nineteenth century, the explorer Burton noted caustically:

We found beasts awaiting us, wretched 'tattoos', cat-hammed wretches, rats, which people here impudently call horses, all skin and bone, very like asses, ten hands high, with goose rump and hanging head, skeletons which a strong man could easily pull over....[T]he ponies of Yoruba...tempers are peculiarly bad, as indeed one must expect from all low-bred animals, quadruped as well as biped.⁷⁵

By the 1820s Oyo had become only a bit player in the supply of slaves to the coast. European buyers dwindled with the abolition of the slave trade and, since it was with re-exported European goods that horses had to be purchased, Oyo thus could no longer import large numbers of horses from the North.⁷⁶ With the collapse of Oyo, the region was plunged into prolonged feuding, leaving a landscape of ruined towns

⁷⁰ Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* 183; 63.

⁷¹ Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba* 124. For a succinct summary see Fage J.D., *A History of West Africa* (Cambridge: 1969) 100–104.

⁷² Smith R., "Yoruba Armament", *Journal of African History* 8, 1 (1967) 87–106.

⁷³ Coupled to this the Fon invaded Yorubaland and after 1800, there was a threat from the North because of the increasing power of the Fulani from Hausaland.

⁷⁴ Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa* 105–106; 89. It has also been suggested that the revolt of the Muslim slaves in the kingdom in 1817 cost them their skilled horses-carers and grooms.

⁷⁵ Burton R.F., *Abeokuta and the Camaroons Mountains – an exploration I* (London: 1863) 61.

⁷⁶ Reid R.J., *History of Modern Africa: 1800 to the Present* (Oxford: 2009) 36.

and a diaspora of refugees. Hundreds of thousands migrated from the savannahs of the north to the forests and coastal areas of the south. Oyo never regained its prominence in the region and became a protectorate of Great Britain in 1888.⁷⁷ The decline of Oyo underscores the fragility of the economy and army not self-sufficient for its own supplies of horses, but rather wholly dependent on foreign trade.⁷⁸

Conclusions

Smaller, locally-adapted horses have had a hidden but significant role in West African history, but their significance has been subsumed by Renaissance era reports of larger, war horses increasingly imported. The staggeringly high mortality of larger horses led to the need for their continual and costly importation. These horses were confined to cavalry in the savannah areas, limited transport and to lavish ceremonial purposes in the south. With the importation of larger breeds, (along with saddle, stirrups, bit, armour), cavalry replaced infantry as the most important force in many West African militaries. Thus horses were continuously imported and became, in some areas, a vital instrument of war and in others an important symbol of social differentiation. Cavalry did play an significant role in state formation in the savannah during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although in idiosyncratic and heterogeneous ways. Increased mobility, lent by the horse, played a key part in the new configuration of power centres, such as the Oyo Empire. Certainly, horses, trade, political leadership, warfare and slavery were closely connected in West African societies, but the key to understanding the linkages is messy heterogeneity and change rather than elegant generality. Cavalry states could not long survive the demise of the pre-colonial social and economic structures to which they were integral, in which horses had been intimately associated with the dominance of a martial aristocracy and with an economy based upon warfare and slavery.

A shocking epilogue of the 'dark horses' trespasses beyond the boundaries of this book's periodisation. Yet, the final irony is that these histories of both acephalous equine warlords and of horsemen

⁷⁷ Oguntomisin G.O., "Political Change and Adaptation in Yorubaland in the Nineteenth Century", *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 15, 2 (1981) 223–237.

⁷⁸ Ajayi J.F.A., "The aftermath of the fall of Old Oyo", in Ajayi J.F.A. – Crowder M. (eds.), *History of West Africa* (London: 1974) vol. II, 147.

as the long arm of the state have both been revived and now entangled. Cavalry, albeit supplemented with mechanized support, has once again become central in slave-raiding and war-lording. In Sudan's Darfur region, so-called Janjawiid, Arab horseman wielding assault rifles, pillage non-Arab African villages in a campaign of terror backed by Sudan's Arab-led government. Traditionally, this name has been used in the past to describe acephalous bandits mounted on horses and camels, who prey on non-Arab rural populations through the stealing of cattle.⁷⁹ The Janjawiid are often nomadic herdsman and their victims are usually settled farmers, so the conflict also reflects the long-standing tension between herders and farmers.⁸⁰ A surplus of guns and a shortage of rain exacerbated the situation: a long history of conflicts exists over Darfur's scarce water and arable land resources in a context of creeping desertification. Along the ancient Saharan trade routes, millennia of shared history have mingled the faiths and skin tones of Arabs and Africans. Many generations of intermarriage have ensured there is little physiological difference, but the Janjawiid cling to the notion of a conquering Arab racial identity: they relish being the heirs of horsemen rather than the descendant of slaves.⁸¹ Janjawiid recruits wear ragtag Sudanese army uniforms but with a special badge depicting an armed horseman. The word 'janjawiid' is a colloquialism, which echoes the Arabic words *jim* (the letter 'G' referring to the G3 assault rifle), *jinn* (supernatural creatures of smokeless fire from Arab folklore) and *jawad* (horse). It has come to mean 'a man with a gun on a horse', 'a horseman who rides his horse swiftly' or simply 'a devil on a horse'.⁸²

⁷⁹ The janjawiid or "Janjaweed" are composed of former bandits, demobilized soldiers, criminals pardoned if they join the militia, fanatics from the Tajammu al-Arabi and those locked in conflict with "Africans" over land. See Prunier G., *Darfur: the Ambiguous Genocide* (Ithaca: 2007) 97.

⁸⁰ See Flint J. – de Waal A., *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War* (London: 2005).

⁸¹ Knickmeyer E., "Darfur slaughter rooted in Arab-African slavery", *The Seattle Times*, 2 July 2004. In southern Sudan, a common term for non-Arab Africans today among the Arab elite remains 'abid' or slave. Sudan long has been (or simply never stopped being) a hub in the Arab-African slave trade. For example, Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army is alleged to trade African children to the Sudanese for an automatic weapon each. For a discussion of the roots of an Arab racist ideology see also Daly M.W., *Darfur's Sorrow* (Cambridge: 2007).

⁸² The Janjawiid prefer to call themselves "fursan" or "horsemen". See Lemarchand R., "Unsimplifying Darfur", *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1, 1 (2006); Straus S., "Darfur and the Genocide Debate", *Foreign Affairs* 84, 1 (2005) 123–133; Vehnämäki M., "Darfur Scorched: looming genocide in Western Sudan", *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, 1 (2006) 51–82; *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur* (2005) United Nation, <http://www.un.org/news/dh/sudan/cominqdarfur.pdf>.

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THE RENAISSANCE STUDS OF THE GONZAGAS OF MANTUA

Andrea Tonni

The Gonzagas' great passion for horses, reflected in the studs they created, began with Ludovico II, Marquis of Mantua, in the fifteenth century. Federico I carried on his father's activities but it was under his own son, Francesco II Gonzaga, the fourth marquis, that breeding activity and imports reached their apogee. If Federico II, Francesco II's son, lacked much of his father's passion and knowledge, he nonetheless achieved good results and, in addition, proved to be a better trader. He improved his father's links with England, for example, one which benefited both parties. Like his father, he was aware of the diplomatic benefits of sending him – and other rulers – superb horses from his studs, even from among his favourite strain of *barbari*. In fact, successive Marquises and Dukes of Mantua regularly used horses as a means of acquiring or exerting diplomatic leverage. They certainly possessed a much sought-after product, their studs being widely acclaimed as among the best in Renaissance Europe. As Jacob Burckhardt, the nineteenth century historian, wrote,

A practical fruit of these zoological studies was the establishment of studs, of which the Mantuan, under Francesco Gonzaga, was esteemed the first in Europe. All interest in, and knowledge of the different breeds of horses is as old, no doubt, as riding itself, and the crossing of the European with the Asiatic must have been common from the time of the Crusades. In Italy, a special inducement to perfect the breed was offered by the prizes at the horse-races held in every considerable town in the peninsula.¹

The sheer volume and range of material in the Gonzaga Archive in Mantua is daunting but for someone wishing to research the history of the family's studs, Carlo Cavrani's *Le razze Gonzaghesche di cavalli nel Mantovano* (1909)² offers an excellent guide to the documentation

¹ Burckhardt J., *La Civiltà del Rinascimento in Italia* (Florence: 1996) 268.

² Cavrani C., "Le Razze Gonzaghesche di Cavalli nel Mantovano e la Loro Influenza sul Purosangue Inglese", *Rassegna Contemporanea* 3,4 (Rome: 1909).

deposited there. Apart from making public hitherto unpublished material, it presents the evidence clearly and in a well-ordered way. Cavriani belonged to a Mantuan family, several of whom had served as Secretaries of State to the Gonzgas, and was a horseman and breeder himself. He could therefore accurately assess the significance of the material he was examining. For a filtered account, Giancarlo Malacarne's book, *Il mito dei cavalli Gonzagheschi: alle origini del purosangue*,³ written in 1995, provides a useful résumé of the Mantuan archive for someone approaching the archives for the first time. Hubert Reade's *Sidelights on the Thirty Years War*,⁴ published in 1924, contains information on the Gonzagan and Savoyard studs, taken directly from the Italian archives. Reade shows particular sensitivity towards and knowledge of Italian history and his ideas, in some measure, reflect the ones expressed in this essay. He emphasizes the importance of diplomacy and the value of the 'silken ties of common pleasures'⁵ established between the European rulers. Thus, an alliance between two kings or politicians could be built on a common interest in horses, shooting or racing. For an essay with a cultural theme like this one, Federico Tesio's historical introduction to *Il Purosangue Animale da Esperimento* is essential reading.⁶ There, the reader will gain an understanding of the esteem in which contemporary rulers and elite held the Mantuan studs, presented by a great thoroughbred breeder and a scholar with a humanist and scientific background. C.M. Prior's *Royal Studs of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*⁷ is still incomparable as a source of information on early English studs, especially, as in this case, their connection with early modern Italian and Mediterranean horses. Tesio relied to a considerable extent upon his English counterpart, a researcher and breeder of thoroughbred horses at Adstock Manor in Buckinghamshire.

³ Malacarne G., *Il Mito dei Cavalli Gonzagheschi: Alle Origini del Purosangue* (Verona: 1995).

⁴ Reade H., *Sidelights on the Thirty Years War* (London: 1924).

⁵ Reade, *Sidelights* 209.

⁶ Tesio F., *Il Purosangue Animale da Esperimento* (Milano: 1947). Published in English with the title, *Breeding the Racehorse* (London: 1994).

⁷ Prior C.M., *Royal Studs of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: 1935).

Mantuan Breeds

When examining the Mantuan studs and stables in detail, it is important to remember that the Gonzagas bred and maintained several types of horses there. The *corsieri* were powerful and well-proportioned creatures, used by the court for special occasions such as tournaments, the *manège* and parades. The *turchi*, that is, Turcomans, possessed both speed and stamina. As discussed below, the Gonzagas may have cross-bred them with pure Barbs and hobbies to create the so-called *barbari* and even the horses known as '*de la raza de la casa*', appointed to run in the *palios* that were held in a number of Italian towns. The question of crossed or pure *barbari*, however, is a vexed one and something which is difficult to work out. The Gonzagas also possessed *ginetes*, Spanish horses of noble origin, and light and elegant on account of the infusion of the North African Barb blood that ran in their veins. Because of the ease of communication between Spain and Morocco, the royal studs of Cordoba could readily acquire imports from North Africa in order constantly to replenish their stock with Barb blood. In addition, the Mantuan studs contained horses, mainly Irish hobbies, from Britain. For more mundane tasks, the Gonzagas kept the *villana* breed, the name implying farm horses; they were heavy, powerful and resilient and were used as draught animals in the countryside. The *virgiliana* strain, named after Vergil, to emphasize the Mantuan connection, were heavy, strong and well-trained, and deployed by the court to transport people and goods.

Barbari were the favourite; imported mainly from North Africa, they were bred and kept separate from the other breeds. The reason why the Gonzagas valued them so highly was due the fame they brought them as a result of their victories in the *palio*. However, as with the names of other breeds in the Gonzagan studs and stables, the family tended to apply ambiguous nomenclature in their documents, accounts and letters. In fact, *barbari* were divided into *barbari naturali* and *barbari* (or *cavalli*) *de la raza de la casa*. The first comprised direct imports, which served as the fount of the breeding programme, whereas the latter sprang from existing *barbari* stock and were mated according to the direction of the Gonzagas and their stud managers. The Gonzagas won many *palios* with *barbari naturali*, as well as with animals *de la raza de la casa*. Note, however, that a *barbaro de la raza de la casa*, bred at a Gonzagan stud from a pure stallion and a

pure mare, was not accounted *naturale*, even if the progeny of two imported horses. It owed its creation to the decision taken by the Gonzagas to mate a stallion to a selected mare. This is why two different breeders could produce very different animals, both starting from the same pure stock. In the execution of this complicated process, the Marquises and Dukes of Mantua were arguably the most adept – and therefore the most fêted – in Europe. A letter that Francesco wrote to his friend, Giuliano, the son of Lorenzo de Medici, possibly in 1514, illustrates the Gonzagan distinction between the use of *naturale* and horses *de la raza de la casa*. Giuliano told Francesco's brother, Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga, and the Bishop of Siena that he was thinking of sending agents to the Barbary coast of North Africa to find first class *palio* horses. With them, he hoped to challenge the dominant position that the Gonzagas had achieved in the races, especially in the most prestigious event of all, the *palio* of San Giovanni in his home city of Florence. Advising him to look for the horses in Spain, Naples, Sicily, Turkey and Phrygia, Francesco added smugly that he was satisfied with the runners bred in his own studs.⁸

In practice, *barbari* mostly remained pure-breds but some of the *barbari de la raza de la casa* that ran in the *palios* derived from *barbari* and *turchi* (and perhaps hobby) crosses. Evidence for the use of *turchi* includes the general appearance of a number of horses depicted in the 'Libro dei Palii'⁹ and because of the shouts of 'Ecco il Turco' when Francesco II entered the *palio* with his best Gonzagan horses. This name was linked to him for at least three reasons: his own grandfather, Ludovico, had been called 'il turco' and the nickname may have persisted; Francesco had a very close and friendly relationship with Bajazet II; and, probably as a result of the receipt of horses on account of this

⁸ Archivo de Stato in Mantua, busta 2921, L. 231, fol. 4v, letter of uncertain date.

⁹ This refers to Silvestro da Lucca's codex of 42 sheets, known as the *Libro dei Palii Vinti dai Cavalli di Francesco Gonzaga 1512–1518, miniato da Lauro Padovano e forse altri due miniatori* (The Book of the Palios won by Francesco Gonzaga's horses, illuminated by Lauro from Padua and possibly two other illuminators), as described in the catalogue of the exhibition that took place at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London from November 1981 to January 1982, entitled *Splendours of the Gonzagas*, where the codex was put on display. The codex is also the best place to study an example of the distinction between *barbari naturali* and *de la raza de la casa*. Here, some horses are listed and then described with a simple name such as El Milanese, El Putino or L'Arabo Barbaro, while others are named as follows: L'orso de la raza, El Renegato gioven de la raza, L'Armellino de la raza or El Mozzone II de la Raza. The latter were bred in the Mantuan studs rather than being brought in from somewhere else.

friendship, many Gonzagan horses acquired some characteristics of the Turcoman horse. Significantly, the Gonzagas also ran pure Turcoman horses, the *turchi*, with great success in the *palio*.

We should also be aware of the habit that the Gonzagas developed of calling each horse they raced in the *palio* as a *barbaro*, even if it were not of Barb origin or obtained from *barbari*. Thus, a horse simply called 'barbaro' in the *palio* field may have been a pure *turco* or a hobby. It seems possible that the Gonzagas deliberately obscured the origins of their *palio* horses in order to prevent other breeders from knowing how they produced their racers. It would be understandable, given the competitiveness of the *palio* events and the prestige garnered by the owner of a winning horse. Even today, there survives the tendency among inhabitants of two small neighbouring towns to underline any kind of difference between them. How much stronger would the politically powerful figures of the Renaissance have felt this impulse. In this respect, the tenor of Francesco II's letter to Giulio de Medici, quoted above, might indicate a desire to conceal the formula for the family's success. The principle of keeping each breed separate from the others and coupling only stallions and mares of the same breed was certainly a tried and tested Gonzagan habit. Indeed, to retain purity, each breed was identified by a particular brand, impressed on the skin of each animal in a precise part of the body. Nonetheless, to improve the racing qualities of their *palio* horses they may occasionally have broken the rule in silence.

The Gonzagas managed a number of studs and stables scattered across their Mantuan territory. Gonzaga, Governolo, Marmirolo, Pietole, San Sebastiano, Sermide and Soave are locations which appear in the letters, usually written as reports by the grooms, trainers and masters, who managed or helped in the management of each stud. Sometimes, they gave direct advice to the marquis, even discussing, for example, a veterinary problem or explaining how many hours the birth of a foal took.

The most famous horse breeding establishment was the stud of San Sebastiano, in the present urban district of Mantua. The name comes from the gate of San Sebastiano, which stood near a little canal that divided the centre of the city from the Isle of Te. On the island, Francesco II built a country house, where he was able to cultivate his interests. The complex included apartments for the marquis and a place for the *gioco della palla* (a precursor of tennis), as well as the

stables and houses for the workers.¹⁰ All were situated in the centre of a spacious meadow, where, as Vasari wrote, 'the marquis [at the time, Federico] [...] used to keep his stock of stallions and mares'.¹¹ Federico, Francesco's son, commissioned Giulio Romano to design the present Palazzo Te on a much grander scale, although it partially utilised the previous structure. Federico wanted a true palace, not only a great stud, so that he could indulge in style all the pleasures for which he was well known and celebrated.¹² Although the two studs were adjacent to each other, they operated as distinct establishments. The stud of San Sebastiano contained the best non-racehorses, the ones reserved for the use of the marquis and his family on formal occasions such as parades and official ceremonies, and privately for casual riding, hunting and related pursuits. The stud situated on the Isle of Te, on the other hand, housed the best products of the other racing studs, brought together for testing as potential *palio* horses on a specially constructed track.

Even so, the most important stud to the Gonzagas was the one located in the little town of Governolo. Here, at the Mergonara stud, the family centred the breeding and management of their racehorses *de la raza de la casa*. Most of the racehorses lived here, along with the best racing stallions. The stud at the town of Gonzaga, with its large complement of *barbari*, mostly *naturale*, and *turchi*, also prepared racehorses for the *palio*. At Pietole in Virgilio, a little town named after Vergil, the Gonzagas kept numerous *barbari* and *corsieri*: during the marquisate of Francesco II Gonzaga, about 200 mares grazed annually on the estate's pastures. Similar numbers could be found at Roversella Farm in Sermide.

At these studs, the staff supervised the annual process of transhumance. At the height of the hot north Italian summer hundreds of horses walked from their quarters around Lake Garda to Ala-Avio, about one hundred miles away on the border of Tyrol. This allowed the animals to enjoy the fresher weather of Mount Baldo and graze on the rich grass of the Alpine foothills.

¹⁰ Belluzzi A. – Capezzali W., "Le Scuderie dei Gonzaga sul Te", *Civiltà Mantovana* 387 n. 42.

¹¹ Vasari Giorgio, *Le Vite de più Eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* (Florence: 1880) 536.

¹² The whole of Belluzzi – Capezzali, *Le Scuderie* is planned to demonstrate the creation of Palazzo Te on the walls of an already existing building.

Acquisition of Horses

One of the most interesting aspects of the studs was the extent and quality of the links which the Gonzagas forged in their efforts to acquire the best horses for their breeding establishments. Expeditions had become frequent by the reign of Ludovico II; particularly focusing on southern Italy, he sent agents there to check on the availability of good horses in the most important markets of the region. The letters that Antonio de Calcho sent to the marquis from Sicily between April and August 1477¹³ reveal all the steps leading to a purchase: from the selection of suitable horses, through the raising of bills of exchange to the final settlement of the account. This example illustrates the importance of the Kingdoms of Naples and the Two Sicilies in the international trade in horses in this period, a standing that owed much to their geographical position. With easy lines of communication to all Mediterranean countries, local merchants could, for example, import great quantities of horses from North Africa and the Near East. Sometimes, horses acquired in southern Italy were pure bred Barbs or Turcomans from their country of origin, while others – Neapolitans provide a good example – were already bred from horses of different provenance. They were also admired because they were cross-bred from stock with the most sought-after blood.

Under Francesco II Gonzaga, Ludovico's grandson, whose marquisate began in 1484, agents departed on trips to North Africa and Turkey with increasing frequency. Francesco was possibly the foremost breeder among the Gonzagas and to achieve his aim of establishing an incomparable stud, he looked for the pure, unmixed blood of North African and Turkish horses. There is a precise reason for the dramatic improvement in the quality of the Gonzagan studs that occurred under Francesco. Of course, he wanted to produce highly respected horses in each of the breeds he owned but, above all, he sought personal renown through victories in the *palio*. Francesco, even more than his grandfather, took special care of the *barbari*, since he was intent on building up his collection of the famous scarlet pieces of cloth awarded to the winners.

¹³ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 805, fol. 377r, letter of April 11th, 1477; fol. 435r, letter of May 20th, 1478; fol. 437r, letter of August 26th, 1478.

Among the expeditions to the East to acquire horses, the Turkish connection stands out. It symbolized the fruitful links that could be made between two disparate cultures, often at war with each other but united by Read's 'silken ties of common pleasures'. In fact, the contacts that Francesco made with the '*Gran Turco*', Bajazet II, from the end of the fifteenth century seem to have grown out of their shared passion for breeding fine horses. Both carefully selected the horses they kept in their studs. We should remember that because Bajazet's empire extended far beyond the borders of Turkey, we should not only think of 'Turkish' horses as coming from that country and being sold at fairs such as the ones at Constantinople. For instance, the sultan controlled valuable horse breeding areas in the Middle East, especially Syria, with its increasingly important horse fair at Aleppo. There, it was possible to acquire pure bred Arabian horses. Similarly, a *turco* imported to Mantua, might have originated in the Balkans, a region rich in cultural and trading connections with other countries.

As he did with other rulers, Francesco developed good relations with Bajazet II, amounting in this case almost to a long-distance friendship (because based on letters and contacts with agents). Even if imports of horses from the Ottoman Empire had already begun, the real start of their 'friendship' occurred in the mid 1490s as a result of an act of generosity on Francesco's part. It involved giving hospitality to one of the sultan's ambassadors, who was robbed of a great sum of money as he was passing through Ancona. Short of funds, the emissary, Dauzio, decided to ask Francesco for help to return to Constantinople. Francesco agreed, dressing Dauzio in true Turkish style and ensuring that he travelled back to Constantinople along a safe route. Bajazet was so pleased with the marquis that he sent him a great number of horses. Francesco returned the favour, dispatching a ship full of Mantuan cheese.¹⁴ Already Bajazet had shown favour to an agent of Francesco. On 21 and 25 September 1491 Bernardino Missaglia, who had been sent to Turkey to buy good horses to improve the Mantuan stock, reported that he had managed to obtain a personal licence from the Sultan to buy eight mares and a stallion.¹⁵ This was a highly significant

¹⁴ The incident is described by Malacarne, *Cavalli Gonzagheschi* 96–97 n. 14, then quoted by Tobey E., "The *Palio* Horse in Italy", in Raber K. – Tucker T., eds. *The Culture of the Horse* (Basingstoke: 2005) 72.

¹⁵ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 795, fol. 33r, letter of September 21st, 1491; fol. 35r, letter of September 25th, 1491.

concession because of the restrictions placed on the exportation of horses, especially mares, from the Ottoman Empire.

There was a great deal of Venetian influence in the relationship between Mantua and Constantinople. Venice enjoyed a privileged position among Italian ports in relation to its trade with the East, and Francesco was the Captain-General of the Venetian army. In 1492 the Doge of Venice, Agostino Barbarigo, ordered Geronimo Marcello, his ambassador in Constantinople, to give Alessio Beccaguto, Francesco's agent, all possible help in his search for 'good Turkish running horses'.¹⁶ On 20 September 1492 Beccaguto informed the marquis of his success. Writing from Albania on his way home from Constantinople, he explained that he had found several good horses in Turkey and more in the Vallona area of Albania.¹⁷

Francesco also enjoyed cordial relations with Mustafâ Begh, the Governor of Herzegh, part of present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina: on 22nd May 1492 he told the marquis that he was sending him two horses from his own stud as a token of friendship.¹⁸ Sometimes, horses from the region were obtained as spoils of war, as the Ottomans expanded their Balkan territories. As the Gonzagas fought as mercenaries with the Imperial forces opposing the Turk in the early sixteenth century, they shared in the division of booty, when the opportunity arose. Thus, letters of Gonzagan captains to Francesco's son and heir, Federico II, not only report the capture of horses taken from Turkish prisoners but also provide details of the animals, preparatory to dispatch to the marquis.¹⁹

On the western wall of the room situated at the entrance of the Camera di Psiche in the Palazzo Te, Romano's picture of *Glorioso*, a grey horse, gives the animal a distinct (and non-natural) reddish tail, an illustration of the curious practice that Federico adopted in the studs where he kept his Turkish horses. It seems as though Federico wanted the tails of his Turkish runners to be coloured with a particular powder called *Alcanna* or *Archenna* 'd'Oriente' ('of eastern provenance') which was imported from Turkey. This habit of his was only

¹⁶ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 1423, letter of May 12th, 1492.

¹⁷ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 795, fol. 40r, letter of September 20th, 1492.

¹⁸ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 795, fol. 37r, letter of May 22nd, 1492.

¹⁹ Tobey refers to the spoils of war in *The Palio Horse* 73, where an interesting letter of Niccolò Rali is quoted (Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 795, fol. 127r, letter of May 16th, 1525).

made possible by the purchases that the marquis (created 1st. Duke of Mantua in 1530) made in Venice, where his agents and ambassadors were always on the look-out for exotic and precious objects to please him. On 4 September 1524 the Mantuan agent, Giovanni Battista, told Federico that he was sending him the powder that would give a red-dish tint to a horse's tail.²⁰ Federico certainly used the powder on his *palio* runners, on one occasion writing to Jacopo Maltesta in Venice for three or four pounds of Archenna to colour the Turkish horses' tails for the day of the next race.²¹ In this way, Federico was making a very public statement of his status. When one of his white or grey horses entered the *palio*, displaying a tail coloured with rare Oriental powder, the image that he was conveying was one of wealth, power and, with his links with exotic countries, his cosmopolitanism.

Exchanges of Horses with European Rulers

The Gonzagas also used their horses to improve their relations with European rulers, though in their dealings with them they tended to be suppliers rather than consumers. On 23 March 1504, for example, Jacopo d'Atri, Francesco II's ambassador in France, wrote to tell his master how anxious Louis XII was to receive the two coursers, a promised gift from the marquis.²² In other letters the ambassador reveals the high regard in which the French kings held Mantuan horses. At the meeting between the French and English kings on the Field of the Cloth of Gold in June 1520 Francis I outshone Henry VIII partly on account of the quality of the horses he was riding, especially those from Mantua. When the French king rode to the lists on 12 June on *Dappled Duke*, a horse from Federico II's stud, Henry VIII so admired it that Francis gave him the stallion as a gift. In return, he received Henry's horse, a Neapolitan courser, which, according to the Soardino, the Mantuan ambassador to France, was a far inferior animal.²³ In terms of the diplomatic leverage which Federico gained from the

²⁰ Castagna R., "L'Alcanna d'Oriente e i Cavalli di Federico II Gonzaga, Ritratti da Giulio Romano a Palazzo Te", *Civiltà Mantovana*, 2nd. series 27 (1990) 109–110.

²¹ Castagna, "Federico II Gonzaga" 110.

²² Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 630, letter of March 23rd, 1504.

²³ Calendar of State Papers Venetian, III, 1520–1526, 62–63.

possession of such a sought after commodity, he clearly benefited from his father's careful and adroit stewardship of the stud.

Francesco supplied horses to Henry VIII of England, even if he seems to have had some misgivings at first. Thus, when his brother-in-law, the Duke of Urbino, asked him for a good horse which he could offer to Henry as a gift,²⁴ the marquis declined, explaining that he would not send so fine an animal to someone who would not appreciate it.²⁵ At that time, Italian rulers believed that the English possessed little knowledge of horsemanship and that the only reasonable English horses were suitable for the draught not for sport or the tournament. He must have relented for on 1 March 1514 Francesco wrote a letter to archdeacon Gabbioneta, expressing his desire to send some good horses to the King of England. He also asked him to dispatch an agent of the king, then coming back from Naples, to his court in order to select choice animals.²⁶ Potential diplomatic benefits evidently outweighed his sensibilities. And they did. When Giovanni Ratto, the marquis's groom, delivered the four coursers – *Altobello*, *Governatore*, *Castano* and *Saltasbarra* – in June 1514 the king was delighted with the gift, declaring that he had never ridden better trained horses nor had he ever received a more agreeable present. In return, he sent the marquis hobbies and hounds, as well as the promise that he could rely on his support on all occasions.²⁷ Further exchanges followed and continued after Federico succeeded Francesco in 1519.

Mantuan Horses and the Evolution of the Thoroughbred

Even if Federico was a less able breeder than Francesco II, his decision to send running horses to England ultimately had far-reaching consequences. The real importance of the Mantuan-English link lay in the

²⁴ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 1068, fol. 380r, letter of July 8th, 1506.

²⁵ The marquis wrote: '[...] L'è ben il vero che mi rincresceria che 'l fosse gettato via e che 'l si levasse di loco ove l'è ben stimato e conosciuto per andare ove non fosse apprezzato nulla [...]', Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 2914, fol. 2v, 3r, letter of August 2nd, 1506.

²⁶ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 2921, L. 231, fol. 78v, letter of March 1st, 1514.

²⁷ Calendar of State Papers Venetian, II, 1509–19, 174–175, 179; Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 578, fol. 86r, letter of June 20th, 1514.

shared interest of the rulers in racing and the influence that exchanges between the two courts had on the quality of their running horses. While the gift of fine parade and *manège* horses made by Francisco II in 1514 is of great cultural and diplomatic interest, it did not contribute to the history of the thoroughbred, for instance. For many people the English Thoroughbred is the horse *par excellence* and, if equine scholars might argue the case of the pure bred Arabian, the former breed is certainly a celebrated English creation. However, as discussed here, it had its antecedents; arguably, the thoroughbred marked the perfect realization of a model represented by an early ancestor, the runners in the *palio*.

In the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth centuries the *palio* races that the Gonzagas contested so fiercely normally took a linear (*alla lunga*) course through the streets of the presiding city and covered distances of up to two miles. At Florence, the Palio of San Giovanni was 1¼ miles long.²⁸ Because they possessed sustainable speed beyond a sheer sprint, the *barbari* were well-equipped to succeed in these races. In England, on the other hand, Alexander Mackay-Smith claims that two contrasting forms of racing co-existed in the period up to the mid seventeenth century: apart from those run over distances of four miles or more, matches over 'drag-strips' of a quarter- to a half- mile took place.²⁹ While it is difficult to prove his assertion that the latter form was by far the more popular of the two, such races did exist. Gervase Markham, writing in 1607, refers to horses, 'which haue beene of greate speede in short courses'. At one event, held at Lincoln in April 1617, James I was in attendance. The minute book records the scene:

On Thursday thear was a great horserace on the heath for a Cupp where his Majestie was present & stood on a Scaffold the Citie had caused to be set vp & withall caused the Race a quarter of a mile longe to be raled & corded with ropes & stoops on both sides wherby the people were kept out & the horses which ronned were sene faire.³⁰

If the wording is ambiguous – it could refer merely to the roping off of the final quarter-mile – the following example provides more

²⁸ Tobey, "The Palio Horse" 65–66 and personal communication.

²⁹ Mackay-Smith A., *Speed and the Thoroughbred* (Lanham MD: 2000) 1–4; 62–65.

³⁰ Markham Gervase, *Cauelarice* (London, Edward White: 1607), book VI, 3; Lincolnshire Archive Office, Lincoln Corporation Minute Book LI/1/1/4, fol. 141v., 3 April 1617.

compelling evidence. It refers to racehorses that belonged to a Mr. Michael Hudson in the early 1630s. According to the *London Post*, he owned a mare that was so fast that no-one would bet against her. He then acquired an even faster nag, one that outran the mare by 120 paces in a half-mile race. The matches took place in Hyde Park, a popular venue among the elite, and perhaps a regular locale for sprint competitions. Clearly, such events were not confined to meetings organised by urban authorities, as Mackay-Smith alleges.³¹

Running parallel to such events were longer contests, which Mackay-Smith called 'hunting races', perhaps as a result of misreading Markham's comments (though hunters' races did exist and continued to do into the eighteenth century).³² If competitiveness among the gentry occasionally threw up examples of long distance races like the run between Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth (about 20 miles) in 1613, the matches that took place on established courses mainly covered four to six miles, with an upper limit of twelve miles. Races at Gatherley Moor came into this category, as did those at Newmarket. In 1639, Lord Salisbury matched his horse, *Cricket*, against Mr. Bannister's bald horse over four miles at Newmarket for a stake of £1000.³³ In spite of Mackay-Smith's assertion that that such races were solely run by the elite, they were appearing at urban meetings well before the end of the sixteenth century. In 1577, for instance, Liverpool's town books record the running of a horse race from Crosby to Bank Hall, a distance of about 4½ miles.³⁴ The number of longer races increased during the course of the seventeenth century but perhaps did not become the norm until the post-Restoration period. Charles II's sponsorship of a series of King's Plates, in which horses carrying 12 stone raced two

³¹ Markham, *Cauearice* Book VI, 3; Hore J.P., *The History of Newmarket and the Annals of the Turf* (London: 1886) vol. II, 130.

³² Markham seems to be drawing a distinction between hunting and running horses in general rather than between two types of racehorse. When commenting on the different dietary requirements of each, he states that the hunting horse had to make 'his winde endure a whole dayes labour', while the running horse 'by winde and nimble footemanship' did 'as much in a moment as his strength or power is able to seconde'. Moreover, when discussing race tactics, Markham focuses on 'bell' matches over several miles. *Cauearice* Book 6, 3–4, 39–49. For hunters' races, see John Cheny, *A Historical List of all Horse-Matches Run* (London: 1741) *passim*.

³³ Shropshire Record Office, Quarter Sessions Papers, 2218; Hore, *Newmarket* I, 346; Verney Lady F.P. (ed.), *The Memoirs of the Verney Family, I, During the Civil War* (London: 1970) 185.

³⁴ Chandler G., *Liverpool* (London: 1957) 429.

to four heats of four miles, accelerated the shift and prioritized the acquisition of horses with speed-endurance capabilities.³⁵

So, both rulers obtained the sort of horses they required. As hobbies were extremely fast over short distances they offered the Gonzagas the opportunity to add extra speed to their *barbari* stock. His agent, Polydore Virgil, had already bought eight of these *ubini* on a trip to England in 1511.³⁶ Markham argued that some English horses (and indirectly Irish hobbies) were faster than Barbs, which in turn could out-run Turcomans. To illustrate the point he reported on a race, in which native horses beat imported Barbs.³⁷

[...] when the best *Barbaries* that euer were in my remembrance were in their Prime, I sawe them ouer-runne by a blacke *Hobbie* at Salisburie of maister Carltons, and yet that *Hobby* was more ouer runne by a horse of maister Blackstones called *Valentine*, which *Valentinen* either in hunting nor running was euer equalled, yet was a plaine bredde *English* Horse both by Syre and Damme to descend to our instant time [...]

For his part, Henry acquired the means of infusing his racehorses with the best blood available at the time, especially to enhance the sustainable speed of his horses in the longer distance races. In the long term, the genes of these Mantuan horses contributed to the creation of the thoroughbred that placed England in the centre of the horse racing world. Indeed, a recent study of the maternal heritage of the thoroughbred, using mitochondrial DNA, reinforces the importance of Barb blood in its genetic make-up. While the researchers conclude that thoroughbred foundation mares possessed a largely ‘cosmopolitan European heritage’, in which British and Irish native mares featured strongly, oriental horses, especially Barbs (but not Arabians) made a significant contribution, both directly and as a component of selected European breeds.³⁸

Henry VIII made his first request for Mantuan racehorses in 1528. In a letter sent to Federico on 1 July 1528, Gregory de Cassalis, Henry VIII’s ambassador at the papal court in Rome, informed the marquis

³⁵ Mackay-Smith, *Speed* 1–5.

³⁶ Calendar of State Papers Venetian, II, 1509–19, no. 129; Tobey, “The *Palio* Horse” 70–71.

³⁷ Markham, *Cauelearice*, vol. I, 10.

³⁸ Bower M.A. *et al.*, “The Cosmopolitan maternal heritage of Thoroughbred racehorse breed shows a significant contribution from British and Irish native mares”, *Biology Letters* (online 6 Oct. 2010): <http://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/early/2010/10/05/rsbl.2010.0800.abstract>. Accessed 25 March 2011.

that Henry possessed some 'Scottish runners' at the time, but knew that Italian *barbari* were better.³⁹ Here, Cassalis was referring to the galloways of the Scottish border country, which ran in distance races of five or six miles. Contemporaries praised the stamina of these horses but they lacked the higher level of sustainable speed of the best *barbari*, found in Mantuan studs. In this letter there is no reference to *horses*, only to *barbari*, and this suggests that Henry wanted to acquire racehorses which possessed these qualities. Federico declined: on July 17th. of the same year he answered that he would be happy to give his master a few excellent horses of a different breed, as he had done in the past years. But, *barbari* were not available.⁴⁰ They enhanced the status of the Gonzagas in every *palio* and Federico did not want to send them to England.

Federico refused to do business at least four more times over the next few years. However, he finally relented when, on 2 June 1532, Cassalis asked for 'qualche cavalla barbera per la razza', that is, some Barb brood mares to breed from.⁴¹ This is significant because it shows that Henry was not merely looking for Barbs in order to race them but rather to use them as a source from which he could improve his own running horses. Through his agent, Henry declared his fondness for racing ('Non avendo al presente il Serenissimo Re d'Inghilterra altro sollazzo che dilettersi di cavalli corridori') and his intention to develop a new strain of runners. To do so, he knew he had to repeat the Gonzagas' stud practices, the ones, incidentally, deployed much later by English thoroughbred breeders: crossing African-Arab blood with existing horses, which already possessed some of the same blood in their veins.

Why Federico agreed is unknown but he did dispatch the horses. In fact, Cavriani wrote in 1909 that he had seen some English papers, with a note inside: a receipt for the payment to a groom sent by the

³⁹ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 876, fol. 521r, letter of July 1st, 1528: 'Più volte ho havuto commissione dal Re mio di fare diligentia di trovare alcuno barbaro da correre, et ultimamente mi fa una istantia grandissima che per ogni modo io voglia un paro de barbari gran corridori, et mi commette che io debba far capo a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, perchè ha inteso che lei ha in tutta excellentia [...]'.
⁴⁰ William Camden wrote of these 'little nagges, which for being well limed fast knit and strongly made for to endure travaile, are much in request and brought from hence'. Camden William, *Britannia*, transl. Philemon Holland (London, Bishop George – Norton John, London: 1610) 18; Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 2969, L. 43, fol. 1v; 2r; letter of July 17th, 1528.

⁴¹ Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 881, June 2nd, 1532.

Marquis of Mantua to bring some brood mares to Greenwich, where Henry had established a racing stud and stable.⁴² Accounts among the Crown papers detail the record of payments to the stud-master and his staff, as well as making reference to *rynning gueldings*.⁴³ Powle, the riding master, was called the 'Keeper of the Barra or Barbary Horses', adopting the Mantuan principle of naming all racehorses as Barbs. Thomas Ogle served as Gentleman Rider of the Stables.⁴⁴ The arrival of this consignment of mares was clearly very significant because it provided Henry (and his successors) with a breeding matrix which would add speed-endurance to his running horses. In Elizabeth I's reign the Greenwich racing stables were 'well-replenished' with Barbs and in 1623 the one at Hampton Court kept Barbs and ginetes as stallions. Barbs also appear in the stud books of Tutbury and Malmesbury. In his book, *Speed and the Thoroughbred*, Alexander Mackay-Smith noted the essential building blocks: the sheer speed of the hobbies and English running horses and the later infusion of sustainable speed as a result of cross-breeding with oriental stallions.⁴⁵ However, as the evidence presented here indicates, he should have paid more attention to the impact that earlier imports – such as the gifts from Mantua – had on the make-up of the thoroughbred.

Conclusion

In the early modern period English breeders developed the most successful type of running horse. In the early sixteenth century, Italian rulers, especially the Gonzagas of Mantua, contributed to the equine base, out of which the thoroughbred emerged two centuries later. The *palio*, the Italian way of racing, created an interest in breeding for sustainable speed, as written by Burckhardt, but over the centuries it became a mere pageant, whereas the English racing system conquered the world. The Gonzagas played their part but in an essay of this length one cannot cover all aspects of their involvement with horses. The entire family was passionate about these animals, as a modern

⁴² Cavriani, *Le Razze Gonzaghesche* 24; As a letter from Cassalis, dated 29 August reveals, his name was Hippolito. Archivio di Stato in Mantua, busta 881, letter of June 2, 1532.

⁴³ Mackay-Smith, *Speed and the Thoroughbred* 26–27.

⁴⁴ Hore, *Newmarket*, I 59–61; Prior, *Royal Studs* 30; 40–41.

⁴⁵ Mackay-Smith, *Speed* 3–4.

visitor to Mantua readily discovers. One can view the horses depicted by Romano at Palazzo Te and the superb courser displayed in the *Camera Picta*, commonly called *Camera degli sposi*. Moreover, inside the Palazzo Ducale the Gonzagas built a great staircase to bring horses directly into the personal rooms of members of the family so that they wasted no time when preparing to go out for a ride.

If the art of Giulio Romano graphically depicts the obsession of that great family of horse breeders, this essay has attempted to widen the perspective. It shows how the Gonzagas integrated their horse breeding activities with politics and diplomacy, establishing links with rulers, who possessed the horses they wanted for their studs, and doing business with rulers who sought the horses they produced. They achieved great fame as a result of the quality of their horses and their success in the *palio* but it was no accident, being firmly based on a well-considered and executed plan: diligence in seeking out the best stock, great care in the selection of horses and a rigorous breeding policy. Thanks to the work of later English breeders, the blood of the horses they bred half a millennium ago still flows in that most iconic of horses, the English thoroughbred.

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III. HORSE-HUMAN IDENTITIES

IMAGE AND REALITY: UPPER CLASS PERCEPTIONS OF THE HORSE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Peter Edwards

[...] Onely Man, by heauenly grace thereunto created, & also by like grace, to the rule and dominion ouer all other Creatures, as to his Birth-right (purposely ordained) is aboue all others in superlatiue esteeme [...]¹

Written in 1609, Nicholas Morgan's comment neatly sums up the early modern assessment of the place occupied by the horse in the natural world. His appraisal, though it emphasized Man's God-given right to exploit Earth's resources, animate as well as inanimate, nonetheless reflected the esteem in which his contemporaries at home and abroad held horses. A few years later, Michael Baret made a similar judgement, declaring that 'of all Creatures that God made at the Creation, there is none (except) man) more excellent, or so much to be respected as a Horse for in disposition and qualities hee is but little inferior to Man (excepting their difference)'.² In a later literary reference, Swift has Gulliver state that horses 'were the most generous and comely Animal we had, that they excelled in Strength and Swiftnes'.³

Clearly, horses were highly placed on the continuum of life-forms, as expressed in the medieval notion of the Great Chain of Being, a refinement of Aristotle's theory of the hierarchy of souls.⁴ The status of horses did not solely depend upon the utilitarian functions they performed, although these were numerous and growing in scope and scale during the period, because other animals had a practical value to their human masters too. What really raised their standing was their iconic appeal. Other animals might become pets and provide a non-functional service, while hunting dogs projected a strong, dynamic image, but no creature could match the potent symbolism of the horse. Mere possession of a horse was a social signifier, marking a real divide

¹ Morgan Nicholas, *The perfection of horse-manship* (London, E. White: 1609) 19.

² Baret Michael, *An Hipponomie or the Vineyard of Horsemanship* (London, George Eld: 1618) 6.

³ Greenberg R.A. (ed.), *Jonathan Swift: Gulliver's Travels* (New York: 1970) 208.

⁴ Edwards P., *Horse and man in early modern England* (London: 2007) 11.

in the structure of society. Horses also helped their owners fashion a sought-after identity.

Most horse owners – farmers, carriers and the like – used them strictly according to function, assessing their worth merely by their ability to perform the job, budgetary considerations allowing. The upper classes required horses to perform specific tasks too but their acquisitions had to look good and project a flattering image as well. To facilitate choice they could read the manuals on horsemanship, which discussed the qualities of different breeds, native and foreign, and gave advice on cross-breeding.⁵ These books also advocated a more gentle approach to training and management, one that respected the standing of the horse in the natural world. Such considerations raise questions relating to the degree of overlap between image and reality. To what extent, for example, were these precepts adhered to in practice and what happened when horses could no longer fulfil the purpose for which they were acquired, iconographic or utilitarian? Could horses exercise a degree of agency, that is, the ability to affect the environment they inhabited? This paper, which focuses on the relationship between genteel owners and their horses, seeks to answer these questions.

Equine Qualities

Morgan explained why he valued the horse, observing that ‘besides (his serviceable obedience) is beautified with a chiefe Excellency of comely shape and courageous boldnesse’, revealing the unique combination of qualities that set the animal apart from all others. Baret reinforced this view, considering that ‘for the vse of man, not onely for pleasure, but also for necessity and profit, there is none to be compared to him’.⁶ While contemporary commentators stressed Man’s superiority over all other creatures, in the genre of the beast fable they also endowed animals with distinctly human attributes, as well as traits reputedly appertaining to other species. Horses seem to have combined the best qualities of all creatures. In 1486 Lady Juliana Berners wrote a book on hawking and hunting, at the end of which she set out the properties

⁵ See below 291–293.

⁶ Morgan, *Horsemanship* fol. A2r; Baret, *Hipponomie* 6.

required of a good horse (Table 1).⁷ In the 1520s John Fitzherbert expanded Lady Juliana's list, adding qualities (as well as animals) but without altering the overall view. A century later Baret's paeon drew on a different set of creatures to extol the virtues of the horse, the animal possessing the strength of a huge elephant; the boldness of a lion, the speed of a roe- or hind deer; the nose of a hound; the toughness of an ox; the love of a spaniel; the intelligence of a snake; and the beauty of a black swan.⁸

Physical and even temperamental qualities of particular animals were readily discernible and could be related to similar traits in humans (or in other animals). More difficult to evaluate was an animal's capacity

Table 1: Berners, Properties of a Horse

| Species | Quality | Meaning |
|---------|--------------------------------|---|
| man | bolde prowde hardy | Courageous Spirited possesses stamina and capable of operating under trying conditions |
| woman | fayre brestid faire of here | deep chest with good heart and lungs fashionable colour: colour was said to denote certain qualities |
| | esy to lip vppon | either (a) tractable when ridden or (b) sexually receptive |
| fox | faire tayle | apart from a long, thick tail, it could mean a well-carried tail: an aesthetic feature |
| | short eris | not lop-eared: alert |
| | good trot | good action and pace |
| hare | grete eygh | good eyesight, with well-placed eyes of a reasonable size: small eyes denoted a bad tempered horse |
| | dry hede | bony head: denoted good quality |
| | well rennyng | a good runner |
| ass | bigge chyne | big chin: firm, well-proportioned? |
| | a flatte lege | legs not coarse or fleshy, with well-delineated tendons |
| | goode houe | round, concave, with well-formed frog: to absorb concussion on landing |

⁷ Berners Dame Juliana, *Here in thys boke afore ar contenyt the bokys of haukyng and hunting*, (St. Albans: 1486) no pagination.

⁸ Fitzherbert John, *The boke of husbandrie* (London, Rycharde Pynson: 1523) fol. 31r–31v; Baret, *Hipponomie* 6.

to reason, almost universally accepted to be a uniquely human faculty. This taxed contemporaries, as did the supposition that animals might possess a soul. If the answers to these questions proved positive, it would affect the way in which humans perceived their charges and treated them.⁹ Horses topped the list of animal intelligence. In 1607 Gervase Markham described a horse as 'a Beast of a most excellent understanding and of more rare and pure sense then any other Beast whatsoever'. In the 1650s, while in exile, the Duke of Newcastle, the renowned horseman, wrote that the Spanish ginete was the wisest of horses, 'Wise, beyond any Man's Imagination'.¹⁰ Praise indeed but, as these two references suggest, contemporaries drew a distinction between human and animal intelligence, indicating that the level attained varied between species and that it had to be looked in non-human terms. In 1639 Thomas de Grey concluded that although horses were dumb creatures, no animal 'doth so perfectly understand and connive with the nature and minde of man'. A century later, John Hildrop made the same point. He admitted that animals did possess understanding but added that it was 'of such a kind or degree, at least as is sufficient for their state and rank in the universal system, and the several duties and offices for which they were intended by their Creator'.¹¹

A minority of commentators adopted a negative stance. In 1587 Leonard Mascall claimed that horses and mules lacked intelligence, arguing that if they possessed understanding they would have used their great strength to prevent humans from exploiting them. He maintained that in place of a brain a horse's skull contained a bladder (panicle) filled with wind and white water.¹² Markham, on hearing this supposition from farriers, determined to find out for himself. He examined several skulls of horses but could not find any 'liquid or thin braine', as in other animals, 'but onely a very thicke, strong, tough, and shining substance, solid and firme, like a tough jelly' which he thought merely to be a panicle. He therefore concluded that horses had no

⁹ See below 297–303.

¹⁰ Markham Gervase, *Cauelarice* (London, Edward White: 1607) VIII 20; Cavenish William, *A new method and extraordinary invention to dress horses* (London, Thomas Milbourn: 1667) 49.

¹¹ de Grey Thomas, *The Compleat Horseman and Expert Ferrier* (London, Thomas Harper: 1639) II 117; Hildrop, John, *Free Thoughts upon the Brute-Creation, or an Examination of Father Bougeant's Philosophical Amusements* (London: 1742) 5.

¹² Mascall Leonard, *The First Booke of Cattell* (London, John Wolfe: 1587) II, 117.

brain. Subsequently, he discussed the matter with 'men of better learning', who told him that nature had prepared horses for a life of heavy labour by providing them with a 'tough and hard, even unpenetrable' brain rather than a 'liquid and moist' one, easily damaged. As a result, Markham changed his mind.¹³ Others were less easily convinced, even after Andrew Snape had comprehensively disproved the theory as a result of his careful dissection of equine cadavers. In his seminal book, *The Anatomy of a Horse*, he declared it 'absurd and ridiculous' that Man, who had a brain, should think that horses did not possess one, adding that he knew of several people who could not be convinced otherwise by any argument whatsoever and who could not take the trouble to look for themselves.¹⁴

The teaching of René Descartes and his followers had a more baleful impact on human perceptions of animals in general and horses in particular. In his *Discourse on Method* (1637) Descartes declared that animals lacked intelligence, basing his argument on their inability to communicate with humans. Had they possessed a rational mind, one that could reflect on what they were thinking and saying, he argued, humans would have understood their utterances. From this, he deduced that animals' actions were governed by instinct, 'which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs, just as a clock, which is only composed of wheels and weights is able to tell the hours and measure the time more accurately than we can do in all our wisdom'.¹⁵ To Descartes, therefore, these 'beast-machines' – governed by impulse, without souls and incapable of speech and reason – occupied a much lower level on the Great Chain of Being than that of humans. Even more pernicious was the conclusion which Descartes's followers drew from his observations, namely, that as mere 'automata', animals felt no pain. In practice, the dissemination of these views probably did not materially change attitudes towards or treatment of horses to any great extent. While the upper classes might read Descartes, they were simultaneously being subjected to the more kindly views of the writers on horsemanship who were arguing for the need for owners to treat their horses with care and consideration. Stable staffs did not read Descartes or, more debatably, the manuals but, as they had a close

¹³ Markham Gervase, *Markhams Maister Peece* (London, Nicholas Okes: 1610) 65.

¹⁴ Snape Andrew, *The Anatomy of an Horse* (London: 1683) 105.

¹⁵ Haldane E.S. – Ross G.R.T. (transl.), *The philosophical works of Descartes I* (Cambridge: 1911) 117; Thomas K., *Man and the natural world* (London: 1983) 33–34.

working relationship with their animals, they were fully aware of their capabilities.¹⁶

In fact, horses kept by the upper classes benefited from the special relationship they enjoyed with their owners; it gave them a degree of agency and positively affected their owners' treatment of them. On a symbolic level the emphasis on 'good blood' linked the elite, a caste obsessed with its lineage, with their horses, increasingly being selected with reference to their 'blood' and parentage. In practical terms, as the elite were a caste of horse-riders, whether for transport, warfare, public display, sport or merely for pleasure, they spent much time in the saddle. Naturally, they became attached to a favourite horse, whom they named and whose temperament and character they knew well. In return, their horses gave them loyal service and, according to the following extract, a host of other anthropocentric responses. In his autobiography, Edward Lord Herbert wistfully recalled a Spanish *ginete* he had once owned,

[...] no horse yet was so dear to me as the Genet, I bought from France, whose Love I had so gotten that he would suffer none else to ride him, nor indeed any man to come near him, when I was upon him as being in his nature a most furious horse [...]. This horse as soon as ever I came to the stable would neigh, and when I drew nearer him, would lick my hand, and (when I suffer'd him) my cheek, but yet would permit nobody to come near his heels at the same time; Sir Thomas Lucy would have given me £200 for this horse, which though I would not accept, yet I left the horse with him when I went to the Low-Countrys, who not long after died [...].¹⁷

Newcastle's wife claimed that his horses demonstrated their affection to him too, stamping their feet when he appeared, performing better at the *manège* while he watched and taking pleasure and pride whenever he rode them.¹⁸ There is an element of wish-fulfilment here. These horses may have reacted in the same way to their grooms, who, after all, looked after the animal at all hours of the day and probably slept

¹⁶ Cottingham J., "Descartes' treatment of animals", in Cottingham J., *Descartes* (Oxford: 1998) 225–233; Thomas, *Natural world* 125–126; Edwards, *Horse and Man* 22–23.

¹⁷ Shuttleworth J.M. (ed.), *The life of Edward, first lord Herbert of Cherbury, written by himself* (Oxford: 1976) 52.

¹⁸ Cavendish Margaret, *The Life of the Thrice Noble [...] William Duke of Newcastle* (London, A. Maxwell: 1667) II, 67.

nearby.¹⁹ The point of the example is not whether the horses actually did possess the human traits expressed here but rather that their owners thought that they did. The belief that horses were superior animals, just below humans in sense and understanding, made it seem irrational to treat them as dumb beasts. This was the argument that the writers of manuals on horsemanship were putting forward. In 1585 John Astley wrote that the horse was 'a creature sensible [...] moved by sense and feeling' and therefore responded better to pleasurable stimuli rather than painful ones.²⁰

The growing number of fine foreign horses imported into the country during the course of the seventeenth century raised equine standing even higher.²¹ It was no coincidence that Swift chose the horse as the model for his race of intelligent creatures, the Houyhnhnms, in his novel, *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726. He surely based these creatures on Oriental horses, bred in the Ottoman Empire, whose appearance in public had an electrifying effect. The experience overwhelmed John Evelyn, who wrote down his impressions on viewing three 'Turkish, or Asian horses' [probably Arabians] in Hyde Park on 17 December 1684. Of a bright bay stallion, he declared, 'Never did I behold so delicate a creature [...] in all regards beautifull and proportion'd to admiration, spirituous and prow'd, nimble, making halt, turning with that swiftness and in so small a compasse as was incomparable, with all this so gentle & tractable.'²² Apart from their beauty and amenable nature, contemporaries remarked on their nobility and intelligence, traits which suggested the presence of a sensitive and rational creature, one that should be treated with respect. These qualities shine out of the portraits of these horses painted by Wootton. As Landry describes the portrait of the Bloody Shouldered Arabian, 'the horse stands 'bright-eyed, intelligent and noble-looking, commanding the space around him [...] He is the still point in a turning world, timeless equine perfection'.²³

Lady Berners's list provides us with an early insight into the qualities that the upper classes were looking for in their horses, especially

¹⁹ But see below 303.

²⁰ Astley John, *The art of riding* (London, Henrie Denham: 1584) fol. Bii r.

²¹ Edwards, *Horse and man* 7–14; 110–113.

²² Beer, E.S. de (ed.), *The diary of John Evelyn, IV* (Oxford: 1955) 398–399.

²³ Landry D., "The Bloody Shouldered Arabian and early modern English culture", *Criticism* 46 (2004) 48.

for hunting and in the cavalry. They had to possess courage and spirit, as well as excellent speed-endurance capabilities, while remaining alert and biddable to the commands of the rider. Physical qualities included a deep chest, powerful hind-quarters, muscular legs and well-formed hoofs. As image was equally important, the horse had to have good conformation, a shapely head and limbs, well-set eyes and a coat in a fashionable colour. General saddle horses would have possessed the same attributes, though they were more likely to be amblers or pacers than trotters. Image and aptitude also combined in the sought-after qualities in horses suitable for coaches, introduced into the country in the mid sixteenth century. They had to be strong enough to do the job but also had to create a powerful visual impact. A set of four or six imposing animals, equally matched in height and action, with fine conformation and in a fashionable colour, provided the perfect accompaniment to the richly carved coach, emblazoned with the owner's coat of arms and manned by liveried staff, the entire equipage serving as a metonym for wealth and status.²⁴

Over the course of the period the upper class emphasis on good quality remained constant but physical criteria altered as the demands of war, carriage, recreation and notions of the equine ideal changed. Thus, the substitution of the lance by firearms during the course of the sixteenth century led to the replacement of large, strong, if rather cumbersome, horses by lighter, faster and more nimble ones. Riding horses, whether on the road or in the hunting field, similarly metamorphosed, with the introduction of first Spanish and then Oriental breeds. At the same time, the elite further refined the roles that their horses had to perform, filling their stables with large numbers of horses carrying out specific tasks. In 1691 Sir Richard Newdigate of Arbury Hall, Warwickshire, compiled an inventory of all his horses to assess whether his stables were sufficiently well-stocked for his needs: he recorded ten for the coach, '3 too many'; eighteen for the cart, 'at least'; eight for hunting: 'few enough'; four for war: 'too few'; five pads: 'enough'; one stallion: 'for breed'; six mares, eight unbroken colts and one black tit (a light saddle horse). Although Sir Richard's avowed maxim was 'Keep few Idle horses', the sixty-one horses he

²⁴ Edwards, *Horse and man* 74; 220.

possessed barely covered his needs. The aristocracy maintained even greater numbers.²⁵

Improving English Horses

At the opening of the period contemporary accounts reveal that the country possessed few horses with the requisite qualities, though some existed in royal and noble stables. In 1511 Polydore Vergil reported to the Francesco II, Marquis of Mantua, that good horses were difficult to obtain in England, attributing their scarcity to poor management when young.²⁶ In 1557 an emissary to Francesco's great-grandson repeated the assertion, claiming that the dissolution of the monasteries had led to the decline in the number of studs producing fine horses.²⁷ In the same year the Venetian ambassador, Giovanni Michiel, observed that the country bred few horses suitable for the heavy cavalry, save for some in Wales and in the royal studs. Most horses were technically ponies (max. 14 hands) and could only serve as mounts for the light horse. Michiel considered them to be weak and lacking in stamina, having existed on a diet of grass. On the other hand, he thought them mettlesome and courageous.²⁸ The best breeds came from the Celtic fringes: the merlins of Montgomeryshire, the galloways of south-west Scotland and, best of all, the hobbies of Ireland. Even foreign rulers admired hobbies for their conformation and speed. In 1514 Henry VIII sent a consignment to the Marquis of Mantua for use in the palio.²⁹ Thomas Blundeville, who wrote the influential book, *The Fower Chiefyst Offices belonging to Horsemanship* in c. 1565, admired hobbies, if with reservations concerning their temperament.³⁰ Large draught horses were also in short supply in the early sixteenth century. The strongest came

²⁵ Edwards, *Horse and man*, 3; Warwickshire Record Office, Newdigate MSS, CR 136/V/142.

²⁶ *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, II, 1509–19 (London: 1867) 51.

²⁷ *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, VI, iii, 1557–8 (London: 1884) 1672.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1049.

²⁹ Edwards, *Horse and man* 12; *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, II, 174–175, 179, 193, 198, 379, 389; *Letters & Papers Henry VIII*, I, ii, 1513–4 (London: 1862) 1451; Tobey E., “The palio horse in Renaissance and early modern Italy”, in Raber K. – Tucker T. (eds.), *The culture of the horse: status, discipline and identity in the early modern world* (Basingstoke: 2005) 71–75.

³⁰ Blundeville Thomas, *The Fower Chiefyst Offices belonging to Horsemanship* (London, William Seres: 1565) fol. 10v–11r.

from the fenland edge of eastern England but even these proved inadequate in wartime. On 23 June 1544, for instance, the Duke of Norfolk and other commanders, reporting from the siege of Montreuil, informed the Privy Council that native horses were weak and unable to draw heavy loads.³¹

Warfare showed up the inadequacies of native stock and, given Henry VIII's desire for military glory, the problem soon manifested itself. Purchases had to be made abroad. In the 1530s the government introduced a series of measures to improve native breeds, banning exports to the continent in 1531 and to Scotland in the following year, while in 1535–1536 and 1541–1542 exhorting the upper classes to arrest the decline by keeping horses of a certain size on their estates.³² Activists, notably among the courtiers, sought emulation by example but it was a slow process. In 1540 John Uvedale, the secretary to the Council of the North, thanked Thomas Cromwell for the bay stallion but added that he wished that every county had such an animal 'for the increase of our breed of horses which is much decayed here for want of good stallions.'³³ Problems of supply persisted into Elizabeth I's reign. Sir Thomas Chaloner, ambassador to Spain in 1561, complained that England possessed 'none but vile and ordinary horses' and exhorted his peers to pay more attention to breeding.³⁴

Gradually, the situation improved to the extent that in January 1606/7 the Holy Roman Emperor put in a request for fine English trotting horses.³⁵ By 1642, the year that England descended into civil war, the country could produce all the horses it needed. Evidence for the difficulties Charles I had earlier experienced in raising serviceable horses for action against the Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates refers to the refusal of a significant proportion of the country's elite to supply him with horses from their stables rather than an indication that they did not possess any.³⁶ When Richard Blome wrote *The Gentleman's Recreation* in 1686, highlighting the sort of horses that

³¹ *Letters & Papers Henry VIII, 1544* (London: 1903) 465.

³² Thirsk J., *Horses in early modern England: for service, for pleasure, for power* (Reading: 1978) 12.

³³ The National Archives: SP 1/159 fols. 84–85.

³⁴ Cited in Dent A. – Goodall D.M., *A history of British native ponies* (London: 1988) 234.

³⁵ *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, Marquess of Salisbury MSS, XIX, 1607 (London: 1965) 23.

³⁶ Estate accounts *passim*.

interested the elite, he claimed that England possessed several breeds of suitable horses. He declared that 'our running horses, hunters and pads, and our horses for all manner of fatigue of whatsoever nature, are not matched in Europe; nor is any horse better for an officer in war, than one our "Twelve-stone horses" (such as usually run for plates) if he is well-chosen and taken in time'.³⁷

This remarkable transformation occurred because breeding standards did improve in general, among farmers as well as among the elite. The importation of foreign stallions and brood mares 'kick-started' the process, enhanced the gene pool and helped to generate a more informed approach to breeds and their capabilities. At the upper end of the market, the large landowners took the lead. Henry VIII delighted in receiving gifts of fine horses, as is indicated by the transactions he made with the Marquis of Mantua, among other potentates. Recognizing the value of cross-breeding, he introduced the policy on his own studs. When he died he possessed well over 1,000 horses in [some of] his stables, including forty-five courser-, five Barb- and six jennet stallions and 103 Flemish mares. The fifty strong body of gentlemen-pensioners, members of the royal household, who oversaw the provision of horses for ceremonial and military purposes, were closely involved. Nicholas Arnold of Highnam, Gloucestershire, for instance, imported horses from Flanders in Henry VIII's reign and later maintained a stud of Neapolitan coursers.³⁸ Blundeville, a gentleman-pensioner in his youth, commended Arnold's stud. He had visited the premises and had viewed colts there 'so wel in their doings as euer I sawe in the Realme of Naples'. He wished others would follow his example.³⁹

In his book, *The Fower Chiefyst Offices belonging to Horsemanship*, Blundeville surveyed a number of the breeds and offered advice on the choice of stallions and mares to use to breed in specific qualities. Aware of the interests of his readership, his account includes information on aesthetic considerations such as beauty, conformation, action, temperament and 'presence' as well as prosaic qualities like size and strength. Blundeville particularly admired the coursers of Naples for '[...] their Jentle nature and docility, their comelye shape, their strength, their Courage, their sure footemanshippe, their well reyning,

³⁷ Blome Richard, *The Gentleman's Recreation* (London: 1686) 2nd part 2.

³⁸ Thirsk, *Horses* 17.

³⁹ Blundeville, *Horsemanship* fols. 11v–12r.

their loftye pace, their cleane trotting, theyr stronge galloppynge, and theyr swift running'. They had served as mounts for the heavy cavalry at the beginning of the period but seem to have declined in quality by the time that Blundeville was writing, probably because they were being superseded as warhorses by lighter breeds.⁴⁰ However, they were still sought after by the elite as 'great horses' for public display; as equestrian portraits of the time indicate, their size, conformation and appearance endowed them with iconographic appeal. They only lost ground to the larger strain of Spanish ginate in the early seventeenth century, though the term 'courser of state' remained as a generic term for a parade horse.⁴¹

William Cavendish, the Earl and subsequently the Marquis and Duke of Newcastle, later wrote disparagingly of Blundeville, as conceitedly he did of all previous writers on horsemanship; he deemed Blundeville 'a Better Schollar, than a Horse-man' [...] Tyed [...] too much to Old Authors, who knew as little as he in Horse-manship'.⁴² There is some truth in Newcastle's assertion – lifting material from the Ancients and from contemporary writers was a common practice – but it did bring the theriophilic [pro-animal] views of Xenophon back into fashion. Moreover, Blundeville's book, the most reprinted text of the sixteenth century, was influential and undoubtedly stimulated interest in the foreign breeds he described.⁴³ Indeed, by the time that Nicholas Morgan wrote, almost a half-century later, a fashion for imported horses had developed, which he ridiculed as an uncritical fad. As he observed, 'almost al the horsemen & breeders within this kingdome doe much insist herein, so as if a Neapolitan, Arabian, Barbarie or such like bee brought into England, how inestimable hee is valued, prised, and solde, and how all men desire him, who can doubt'.⁴⁴

Morgan's point was a valid one and unscrupulous dealers doubtlessly palmed off inferior specimens to gullible aristocrats with the money to buy these exotic creatures but with less skill in distinguishing the good from the bad and the indifferent. Newcastle also thought that dealers and merchants traded in inferior stock and he therefore advised caution.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Blundeville, *Horsemanship* fols. 7v–8r.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Horse and man* 30.

⁴² Raber, K., 'A horse of a different color: nation and race in early modern horsemanship treatises', in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the horse* 231–234.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 234.

⁴⁴ Morgan, *Perfection* 19.

⁴⁵ Cavendish, *A new method* 54–57.

In this respect, such writers were performing a valuable service; they refined their readership's perception of imported horses by warning them of the pitfalls and teaching them the points they should look for in a good animal. Even so, Newcastle took a less jaundiced view than Morgan, advocating the importation of prime breeding stock, especially stallions, while emphasizing the fact that the best horses cost a lot of money. A 'right' Arab, for instance, could fetch between £1000 and £3000.⁴⁶ Newcastle made it clear that cross-breeding with foreign horses had improved the quality of the native stock. As he observed, 'English Horses are the best Horses in the whole World for all Uses whatsoever, from the Cart to the Mannage; and some are as Beautiful as can be any where, for they are Bred out of all the Horses of all Nations.'⁴⁷ Typically, he insisted that his readers follow his instructions, selecting the best, according to his criteria, and sticking to his breeding and training programmes. When commenting on the qualities of various breeds, he made a jibe at Blundeville and his love of Neapolitan coursers, which Newcastle considered to be 'Dull heavy Jades, fitter for a Brewer's-Cart than the saddle'. He preferred the Spanish ginete, declaring him to be the noblest horse in the world on account of his conformation, beauty, action, courage and temperament. He was the best stallion to breed from for all elite purposes – the *manège*, cavalry, riding, hunting and racing – but was not suitable as a sire of carthorses!⁴⁸

Horses and Status

Horses were valued for what they represented as well as for what they could do and this allowed them to exercise a greater degree of agency than was possible for other animals. This was particularly true among the horses owned by the elite, for whom horsemanship was virtually a defining attribute. As such, it was a vital element in the education of young gentlemen, many of whom were sent abroad to acquire the skills: in Italy at first but by the end of the sixteenth century, in France. Naturally, princes had to be adept horsemen. As James I told his son,

⁴⁶ Ibid. 72.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 58–63.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 49–52.

Henry, 'It becometh a Prince better than any other man to be a fair and good horseman'.⁴⁹ To help Henry and his brother, Charles, the king persuaded Henry IV of France to send his riding master, Monsr. St. Antoine, to England to teach them to ride.⁵⁰ So powerful was the image of a gentleman on horseback that many members of the elite refused to travel in coaches in the period after their introduction into England. It smacked of effeminacy and, more worryingly for some, would lead to the decay of vital horsemanship skills essential to the cavalry in wartime. John Rushworth was one such member of the 'old school', determinedly riding in all conditions. In a letter he wrote to Newcastle on 14 July 1671 the sixty-three year old apologized for not visiting him while riding from Lincoln to Doncaster. Having set out from Lincoln at 10 a.m. the previous day, he rode for about twenty miles through continuous rain before being forced to stop at Eel Pie House on Markham Moor to dry out. It took three hours, during which time he decided to ride on to Doncaster without making a detour to see Newcastle at Welbeck, 'the violence of the Raine continuing'. Clearly, he did not consider taking the coach!⁵¹

Good horsemanship mattered to the elite because it enabled them to exploit perceived equine attributes to project an aura of wealth, power and authority. In 1531 Sir Thomas Elyot made the essential connection, commenting that 'the most honourable exercise [...] of euery noble persone is to ryde surely and clene on a great horse [...] whiche [...] importeth a majestie and drede to inferior persones beholding him aboute the common course of other men'.⁵² When a nobleman rode in public on a great horse, the spectators' attention tended to focus on to the horse and his trappings. It was the horse that invested the rider with the sought-after image. In effect, the rider and the onlookers were playing out set roles in a piece of social theatre. In a hierarchical society the image provided the spectators with a graphic reminder of who ruled them and why, the spectacle validating the elite's fitness to rule. Easy mastery of a spirited horse, a social signifier in itself,

⁴⁹ Cited in Reese M.M., *The Royal Office of the Master of the Horse* (London: 1976) 166.

⁵⁰ Strong R., *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's lost Renaissance* (London: 2000) 41–42.

⁵¹ British Library, Additional MS 70500, 81.

⁵² Elyot Sir Thomas, *The Boke named the Governour* (London, T. Berthelet: 1531) fol. 68v.

equated with possession of those rare qualities required to govern humans effectively.

A cavalcade, comprising one's household officers and servants, all dressed in livery and mounted on fine horses, exponentially increased the iconographic impact of the horse. In 1562, for instance, Thomas, 4th Duke of Norfolk, rode into London for a stay, attended by hundred liveried horsemen. If any observer doubted the political symbolism of the show, the presence of members of Norfolk's affinity [client gentry], dressed in velvet and preceding the duke, soon convinced him otherwise.⁵³ Parades added a ceremonial flourish to official events, the better to dazzle the onlookers and to impress one's peers. The latter group were the more critical. The grandest spectacles were those that embellished royal occasions, especially when, as in the reception of a foreign emissary, the nation's prestige was at stake. When, in June 1546 a French embassy, led by the Lord Admiral, came to England to ratify a vital peace treaty between the two countries, it was 'magnificently received'.⁵⁴ Accompanying the emissary were his staff of 200 officers and fifty-five peers and gentlemen with a combined entourage of 1130 men. A mounted reception party, led by Prince Edward, totalled nearly 800 dignitaries and their followers. Additional mounts were to be stabled at Hampton Court for the guests' use, presumably for activities like hunting and hawking, which offered further opportunities to show off one's equestrian skills. The provision of fine horses – and in large numbers – was, therefore, a matter of great concern. Not only did the English cavalcade have to impress the visitors but the horses loaned to the French embassy had to be of equal quality. To have foisted inferior stock onto members of a peace embassy from the erstwhile enemy would have been regarded as a great insult by the guests, possibly leading to the scrapping of the treaty, which the impecunious English government was anxious to conclude.⁵⁵

When crowned heads actually conferred, the meeting resembled the ritual of display and assertiveness exhibited by two alpha males in the animal kingdom vying for supremacy. In terms of pageantry, size and quality mattered, as Henry VIII recognised when he scoured Europe for fine horses in advance of his meeting with the French king,

⁵³ Nicholas J.G. (ed.), "The Diary of Henry Machyn", *Camden Society* 42 (1848) 294.

⁵⁴ Scarisbrick J.J., *Henry VIII*, London: 1988) 464.

⁵⁵ *Letters & Papers Henry VIII*, 21, i, 1546 (London: 1908) 694–695.

Francis I, on the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. The focus of much of the action on the tiltyard there similarly echoed the 'jousting' of animals, in which the object was not necessarily to kill but rather to exert one's dominance. Throughout the whole meeting, horses occupied the forefront of the stage, in effect, setting the agenda, as the two monarchs and their followers acted out a series of dramatic tableaux, designed primarily to show off the quality of their respective horses and their ability to control them. Negotiations did take place but in the diplomatic cut-and-thrust Francis's clear superiority in horses gave him a distinct advantage.⁵⁶

Horses helped the upper classes project the looked-for image inwardly onto themselves as well as outwardly onto others in public. Astride a great horse, the rider could borrow the qualities of the animal: nobility, strength and courage. The genre of the equestrian portrait, popular among the upper classes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, illustrates the point. The sitters, on horseback and normally dressed in armour, convey an air of confidence, authority and martial prowess. Prince Henry, the elder son of James I, was a keen horseman, responsible for the building of the first riding school in the country, and a recipient of gifts of fine horses from abroad. He also possessed a precocious interest in his self-image. Robert Peake, for instance, painted the nine-year old Henry in a hunting scene, in which the brave young prince stands over the dead stag, in the act of sheathing his sword. A retainer holds his great horse from which he has alighted to deliver the coup de grace.⁵⁷ When at the age of sixteen he became Prince of Wales, he commissioned an equestrian portrait of himself, which represented him as the king in waiting and hinted at his aspirations as ruler. Of a martial disposition, Henry's armour-clad body transcended the conventional symbolism of the pose and foretold a radical shift of policy under his direction.⁵⁸

Horses even helped form the nation's identity and not merely in the geohumoralist sense. Advances in the quality of English horses, increasingly evident in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, occurred at the time that the country was expanding its commercial empire and prospering. A more assured nation, aware of its

⁵⁶ *Calendar of State Papers Venetian, III, 1520–26* (London: 1896) 14–84 *passim*.

⁵⁷ Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales* 32–33.

⁵⁸ Edwards, *Horse and man* 30.

hybrid genetic make-up, could equate its own accomplishment with the success of the equine cross-breeding programme. The thoroughbred, an amalgam of native and Oriental genes, symbolized this progress; not only did it become a naturalized breed but it also served to define Englishness. Thoroughbred crosses, as hunters, helped to define Englishness in the political sense too. Elite riders flew around the countryside, riding short on a lightweight saddle, gently controlling their mount with loose reins and a snaffle bit. In practical terms, the technique encouraged forward movement, enabling huntsmen (as well as jockeys) to travel more quickly and allowing the horse a degree of initiative. The image of the relaxed horse and rider, acting in harmony, served as a powerful political metaphor. Symbolically, it signified English liberty in comparison to the benighted inhabitants of continental absolutist states, where horsemen rode on high pommelled saddles with long-stirrups, tightly controlling their mounts with curb-bits.⁵⁹ Paintings such as Stubbs's depiction of the Grosvenor Hunt (1762) capture the iconographical implications of the scene.

Treatment of Horses

Given the esteem in which horses were held, one might expect that their genteel owners treated them well. Apart from the cost, they wanted to display their horses at their finest and it therefore made sense to cosset them. Indeed, the upper classes spent considerable sums on their charges. With due allowance to individual circumstances, they housed them in custom-built stables and hired servants and specialists to look after them. The Crown employed the largest number of people, with a complement across the country in the hundreds. Stable staff on reasonably sized estates would generally comprise a keeper and a number of grooms, labourers and lads, perhaps, as at the Welbeck and Wimpole homes of Lord Oxford in the early eighteenth century, with some duplication at separate seats.⁶⁰ Specialists like blacksmiths, farriers and breakers might work in-house, especially on the largest

⁵⁹ Landry D., "Learning to ride in early modern Britain: or the making of the English hunting seat", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the horse* 29ff.; Landry D., *How Eastern horses transformed English culture* (Baltimore: 2008) 44ff.

⁶⁰ British Library, Additional MSS 70385–6; Nottingham University Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Portland MSS Pl/C/1 *passim*.

estates, but more commonly were hired when required. On Lord Brooke's Warwick Castle estate in 1648–9 John Coachman managed the stables, supported by two grooms, Thomas Earle and Jonas, and John the labourer. Lord Brooke gave work to a number of blacksmiths, while Wyatt the farrier tended to sick or injured horses.⁶¹ When stabled, estate horses also received generous rations, a bushel to a bushel and a half of oats, a peck of beans, as well as hay, a week. Coach and cart horses fared even better.⁶² If put out to graze, horses occupied land that could have been farmed more productively. In his memoirs Sir John Reresby of Thrybergh wrote of his grandfather, Sir George Reresby, that his main interest lay in his stud, even though it proved unprofitable. As Sir John observed, 'the Keeping of much ground in his hands both at Thriberg and Ichles For running of his horses which he might haue let at good rates made it the more expensiuē'.⁶³

If Reresby were typical of other enthusiasts, his horses inhabited a landscape designed to cater for their needs. He would have kept his horses in a series of paddocks, the better to rotate the grazing and to segregate his stock into separate groups. Groves of trees and open sheds provided cover and shade. The brood mares, in particular, needed to be kept apart from the herd in order to control conception and to prevent illness or injury when in-foal or with followers. As Sir Roger Pratt of Ryston Hall, Norfolk noted in his commonplace book in 1680, 'the breeding Mares are to bee severed from the rest of the Horses when bigge with Folde (sic), otherwise they are often Kicked, & soe miscarry, as I founde by Experience'.⁶⁴ In the 1720s, horses on Lord Oxford's estate at Welbeck were also carefully segregated. On 23 August 1723 the stables contained the Bloody Shouldered Arabian stallion, a gelding, three hunters, three colts, two fillies and Mr. Porter's bay mare. Six brood mares and three foals lay in Stanclose, while four more mares and five fillies of his, along with four mares belonging to Mr. Smith (1) and the earl of Kinnoull (3) lay in Rain Park. Five of his colts grazed in Toad Home and The Paddock and seven undifferentiated horses, mostly allocated to servants, occupied Cowclose Wood.⁶⁵ Hunting, the archetypal genteel sport, also affected the landscape. Medieval forest

⁶¹ Warwickshire Record Office, Warwick Castle MSS, CR 1886/411.

⁶² Nottingham University, Portland MSS, Pl/C/657.

⁶³ British Library, Harleian MS 29,443, fol. 3v.

⁶⁴ Norfolk Record Office, Pratt of Ryston MS, m/f reel 218/7.

⁶⁵ British Library, Additional MS 70385, fol. 72.

laws aimed to preserve large tracts of land in a state suitable for hunting game at the expense of agricultural development, as did enclosed deer parks, if in a different way. Enclosure in the early modern period affected the acreage of woodland (and forest) and where insufficient cover remained, hunting squires planted or retained covets to enable wildlife, especially foxes, to breed. Racing had surprisingly little impact on the landscape in the period up to 1750, as many of the courses lay on open common land and the sport only required a few temporary posts at the end of the course and perhaps an equally short-lived grandstand. Ironically, as elite-patronised venues, these sites were less likely to be enclosed into a patchwork of fields. By 1750 some courses had raided-off courses, with permanent grandstands and stabling.

The landscape also changed the horses, their physical make-up being affected by such variables as the nature of the soil, the lie of the land and aspect. Desert Arabians grew in stature in England, partly as a result of cross-breeding but also on account of the better fodder they received. Blundeville recommended dry upland pastures, grassy but partly rock-strewn ground, so that the colts and fillies developed strong legs and hard hoofs. This suggests downland and wold, ideal places to rear young horses and build up good bone on account of the calcium in the soil. Blundeville disapproved of low-lying wetlands because of the rankness of the grass and the soft ground. Horses bred here, he claimed, would turn out to be, 'slowe, heauy, dulle, grosse hedded, side bellied, and gouty legged Jades'. He overstated his case but moorish grounds did engender soft feet and were more suitable for large, heavy draught horses than fine saddle mounts.⁶⁶

Horses were prone to illness and injury but at least upper class owners could afford to provide them with the best treatment possible. After all, they wanted to protect a valuable asset and one with which they were strongly identified. Equine medicine closely mirrored the treatment of humans, that is, it was based on the Galenic theory of the four humours. Account books contain many references to bleeding, administering purges and applying poultices. Until the 1720s books on horsemanship usually included a section on farriery, and gentry read the advice and learned from it. Members of the elite collected remedies and passed them among one another. In February 1662/3 Sir John Gell of Hopton Hall (Derbys.) informed his son, John, that

⁶⁶ Blundeville, *Horsemanship* fol. 4v.

he had given his man, Parker, a recipe and a potion for the [horse] plague.⁶⁷ Nicholas Blundell of Ince Blundell (Lancs.) took a personal interest in the cures, regularly entering the details in his diary. On 11 March 1707/8 he noted in his diary that he had mixed a powder to take a film off Snowball's eye. It didn't work, so when on 21 October 1712 he recalled teaching Watty how to make a powder to cure that condition, one hopes that he had improved the recipe! Sensibly, he regularly asked for professional help.⁶⁸

Whereas a keeper of the stables would have possessed an understanding of basic veterinary practices, for difficult cases it paid to call in an expert farrier. In 1639 Henry Oxinden of Deane, Kent, consoled his grandson, Henry, over the loss of his horse but added, 'I wish this may bee a warning to you hereafter not to preferred a pretended farrier before an experienced one'.⁶⁹ Treatment might take some time and entail numerous visits, an indication of how highly landowners regarded their horses. In 1551 Newton the farrier made six trips to Beaudesert, the home of the Paget family in Staffordshire, to treat the horses. One colt required fresh applications of dressing for over six weeks.⁷⁰ In May 1726 Isaac Hobart, Lord Harley's estate steward at Welbeck, reported that one of the colts was in a bad way and that Bowron, the keeper of the stud, would take the horse to the home of the farrier, a Mr. Marriott, over twenty miles away at Brodsworth near Doncaster, as soon as the animal was fit to travel. The colt moved there in mid-July and only returned on 10 September, three and a half months later.⁷¹

If the perceptions of upper class owners allowed horses a degree of agency and thus receive preferential treatment, it was, nonetheless, a conditional one. It depended upon the continued display of those qualities which gave them their influence in the first place. Because the elite maintained very high standards it did not take long for a horse to fall below an acceptable level, whether through age or infirmity. Old horses or those with an incurable illness or injury could not perform their allotted role effectively nor project the right image. According to

⁶⁷ Derbyshire Record Office, Chandos-Pole-Gell MSS, D258/Box 29/44b.

⁶⁸ Bagley J.J. (ed.), "The great diurnal of Nicholas Blundell of Little Crosby, Lancashire", *Record Society of Lancashire & Cheshire* I 110 (1968), 165, 38; II 112 (1970) 38.

⁶⁹ Gardiner D. (ed.), *The Oxinden Letters 1607-1642* (London: 1933) 146.

⁷⁰ Staffordshire Record Office, Paget of Beaudesert MSS D(W) 1734/3/4/177.

⁷¹ Nottingham University, Portland Collection, Pl/C/1/488; British Library, Additional MS 70385/179; Additional MS 70385/187, 195, 197.

data drawn from the Blomfield estate at Stonham in Suffolk, the value of horses peaked around seven years old, only holding steady for a year or two before depreciating.⁷² Once past their best, horses were not necessarily discarded but were moved down the pecking order, being replaced by younger, more showy animals. Many were sold on, perhaps locally or at a fair, often to someone of a lower status. The horses could still function effectively and, if not gelded or spayed, could produce good quality offspring. Bought by a farmer or a carrier, they worked harder, received less care and suffered poorer living conditions. If retained on the estate, in whatever capacity, they had to earn their keep.

When estate horses were no longer able to work, few of them enjoyed an honourable retirement. Their inevitable fate was to be sold to the knacker or to be killed and fed to the hounds.⁷³ For all the perceived nobility of their horses, upper class owners clearly viewed their charges as expendable commodities. So common was this attitude that it served as a simile for harsh treatment. Thus, the Earl of Leicester's lack of consideration for his aged retainers was likened to an old horse, cast off and abandoned, or sold to a dogmaster for 40d.⁷⁴ Swift summed up the change of attitude well when he had Gulliver explain to the houyhnhnms what happened to horses which the elite no longer wanted. Horses were, treated 'with much Kindness and Care, till they fell into Diseases or became foundred in the Feet; and then they were sold for what they were worth, and their Bodies left to be devoured by Dogs and Birds of Prey.'⁷⁵ Of course, there were exceptions. Sir Matthew Hale, for instance, provided his old horses with a restful retirement on the estate, while Ralph Palmer, like Edward Lord Herbert, was devastated at the death of a favourite horse.⁷⁶ In such instances, one might expect that reaction but did owners feel the same grief over the death of all of their horses? Perhaps – they had read the manuals and the exhortations to cherish their horses – but the evidence suggests otherwise.

⁷² Suffolk Record Office, Blomfield MSS, HD 330/7.

⁷³ Edwards, *Horse and man* 32–33.

⁷⁴ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Addenda, 1580–1625* (London: 1872) 138.

⁷⁵ Greenberg, *Gulliver's Travels* 208.

⁷⁶ Cited in Thomas, *Natural World* 190; Berney M.M. (ed.), *Memoirs of the Verney family*, IV, 1660–1696 (London: 1970) 376.

If circumstances warranted it, members of the elite abused the horses they were using. Even personal saddle mount suffered from the excessive use of spur and the whip. In a Scottish example of 1589, Robert Lang so overtaxed his horse on a 'very troublesome' journey north from southern England that he tired it out. Without compunction, he sold it at Stamford and continued on his way. On a journey in February 1621 Mr. Henry Vavasour's horse broke down at Hoggesdon, having been beaten so hard that the rider was 'so tiered and dirtied.'⁷⁷ Riders, urging on their mounts in a tight race or in an exhausting pursuit of a quarry, tended to forget about the notion of cherishing. According to Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador, Henry VIII was so keen on hunting that he tired out eight to ten horses in the chase.⁷⁸ Of racing, Thomas Tryon complained (c. 1683) of 'over-straining (as in such manner as is commonly practised) and over-forcing creatures, otherwise so truly usefull, beyond their strength.'⁷⁹ The growth in the popularity of racing and an increase in the sums wagered, inevitably led to sharp practice and a win at all costs mentality. Horses involved in plates often raced up to four times in an afternoon over four to six miles, perhaps over rough ground, and must have been exhausted at the end of the day. Head-to-head matches ostensibly took less effort but, as the prizes were higher, the riders drove their mounts on that much harder. On 14 April 1698 Lord Hervey noted in his diary that his horse, Lobcock, had finally beaten Looby the previous day. Lobcock had led over the first seven miles but Lobcock, 'whipped and spurred from shoulder to flank', overtook him and won his owner 325 guineas. Looby went lame with the effort.⁸⁰ Coach horses also suffered. In 1653 Dr. William Denton left one horse dead at Aylesbury and in 1656 lamed three other horses as he hurried to a confinement.⁸¹

Even if the owners treated their horses carefully, they could not always control the actions of their servants, whose emotional affinity to their charges was less pronounced. In 1617 Richard Cholmeley

⁷⁷ *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, Marquis of Salisbury MSS, III (London: 1889) 437; Ashcroft M.Y. (ed.), *The memorandum book of Richard Cholmeley of Brandsby 1602-1623* (Northallerton: 1988) 216.

⁷⁸ *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, III 119.

⁷⁹ Tryon Thomas, *The country-mans companion* (London, Andrew Sowle: 1684[?]), chapter 1,1.

⁸⁰ S.H.A.H. (ed.), "Letter-books of John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol 1651 to 1750", *Suffolk Green Books*, 1 (1894) 137.

⁸¹ Verney M.M., *The Memoirs of the Verney family*, III, 1650-1660 (London: 1970) 195.

dismissed two of his servants for killing one of his mares and seriously injuring two other horses by 'riding and chasing' on them. In 1661 Sir Ralph Verney accused his son, Edmund, of killing his black nag because of the latter's failure properly to oversee his servants, the implication being that unsupervised staff generally acted irresponsibly.⁸² In May 1722 the condition of foals returning from Mr. Ovington senior's stable in Yorkshire shocked Isaac Hobart, Lord Oxford's steward at Welbeck. He had never seen horses in a worse condition; several were almost covered with 'vermin', due, he thought, to insufficient fodder and, by inference, the neglect of the servants. Later in the year he had to report two of his own stable servants for dereliction of their duties; one of them regularly disappeared at night and the other often stayed out for two or three days.⁸³ A conscientious steward like Hobart was more likely to find out what was going on but absconding was difficult to police if the servants sneaked out at night. The servants perceived it differently. Poorly paid, often sleeping in the stable loft and on call twenty-four hours a day, it is not surprising that they occasionally sloped off, the threat that such an action posed to their unsupervised charges notwithstanding. It was a dirty, tiring and tedious job, with none of the compensations, practical or iconographical, and this must have affected the degree to which they identified with the horses in their care.

Conclusion

Early modern England depended upon horses and to a greater extent at the end of the period than at the beginning. Most people therefore valued horses for the essential services they provided, performing a wide range of tasks, variants on the basic functions of carrying goods or people, pulling vehicles or equipment, or working machinery. The upper classes used horses for the same mundane tasks too but, because they could afford to maintain a large number of horses, they used them for highly specific purposes, including non-utilitarian ones. Their horses not only had to be capable of performing the tasks but to do them well and look good at the same time. Image mattered. In

⁸² *Cholmeley of Brandsby* 142; Verney, *Memoirs* IV 169.

⁸³ British Library, Additional MS 70385, fols. 31, 37, 40.

this respect, genteel society could exploit contemporary perceptions of horses as noble, intelligent and beautiful animals for their own iconographic purposes. A stable full of fine horses proclaimed the owner's wealth and standing, whereas to appear in public on a spirited, well-proportioned mount enabled the rider to give off an air of power and authority. Although perceptions of what constituted the equine ideal varied over time and according to function, the importance of the image projected did not waver.

At the beginning of the period most of the native stock was unsuitable, though a few choice specimens could be found in the stables of the elite. The Crown and the *cognoscenti* imported horses with the requisite qualities: Neapolitan coursers for powerful, comely and tractable saddle horses and Flemish horses for the wagon and (from the middle of the sixteenth century) the coach. The Crown and the court took the lead but real improvement was not apparent until well into Elizabeth I's reign. Thomas Blundeville's book, *The Fower Chiefyst Offices belonging to Horsemanship*, published in 1565, was very influential, pointing out the attributes of numerous foreign breeds to its genteel readership and providing them with advice on cross-breeding for particular functions. The admixture of foreign blood improved people's perceptions of the quality of native horses at home and abroad and within the country led to a greater awareness of the attributes of specific breeds, and therefore to advances in breeding practices. Apart from the genetic benefits which these horses brought, the possession of a fine foreign horse brought renown to the owner, to the extent that Nicholas Morgan could satirize the motive in 1609.

The upper classes exploited their horses as a means of self-publicity, all the better to convince the population at large of their fitness to govern them. They also contributed to the image they had of themselves. As their horses had to look the part, they were well cared for. In this respect, upper class perceptions of their horses' qualities and the use they made of them, gave the animals a degree of agency. Horses influenced their physical environment; fundamentally affected all aspects of human society, whether social, cultural, political, psychological or economic; and materially influenced their living conditions. The nobility and intelligence of these creatures, so evident in the fine-featured and beautifully proportioned Arabians, seemed to underline the point that the writers of manuals on horse management were making, namely, that one should treat horses with care and consideration. The closeness

of the relationship between a gentleman-rider and his horse furthered strengthened the bonds and feelings of affection. However, horses merely enjoyed a provisional agency, one that only lasted as long as they could carry out their allotted roles. When they could no longer fulfil any useful function – and this might change over time – they were cast aside and disposed of without hesitation.

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‘KNOW US BY OUR HORSES’: EQUINE IMAGERY
IN SHAKESPEARE’S *HENRIAD*

Jennifer Flaherty

Shakespeare’s *Henriad* is teeming with references to horses, from common carrier horses to the mythological Pegasus. Ironically, the abundance of horses in Shakespeare’s complete works has led critics to overlook much of the equine imagery in the plays. Heaney explains that, “There are very few horses worth noting in the Shakespearean canon. There are plenty of horses, of course – the plays are littered with them. But not many are singled out for attention”.¹ While only a few of the horses that litter the *Henriad* are singled out for attention, I believe that the many horses throughout the tetralogy are certainly worth noting. Shakespeare was writing for an early modern English audience who recognized horses as an integral part of their culture; understanding the currency of horse knowledge to the period allows readers unique insight into the plays. My title comes from a comment by Prince Hal in *Henry IV, Part 1* when he and Poins are planning to disguise themselves during the Gadshill robbery. Hal takes issue with the plan, arguing that Falstaff will ‘know us by our horses’; so, he and Poins agree to commit the robbery on foot to avoid being instantly recognized (1.2.169–70).² In context, this line functions as an excuse to avoid the trouble of staging a robbery on horseback. The phrase takes on a deeper meaning, however, as throughout the tetralogy men are measured by the mounts they ride. The way a character carries himself on horseback can be crucial to earning or maintaining a strong reputation, and the horses themselves act as symbols that denote king and country. Over the course of the four plays, Shakespeare invites the audience to ‘know’ these men by their horses; the descriptions of horsemanship and equine mythology surrounding each character

¹ Heaney P.F., “Petruchio’s Horse: Equine and Household Mismanagement in *The Taming of the Shrew*”, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 4, 1 (May, 1998) 2.1–12.

² All quotations from Shakespeare’s plays will be cited in-text. They are taken from the following: Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. D. Bevington (New York: 2004).

present a clear picture of their disposition. Key figures in the tetralogy are defined by brief 'portraits in horsemanship.' Horses provide a code of reference throughout the plays, giving the audience a means by which to understand individual and national identities.

In the prologue of *Henry V* the Chorus asks the audience to 'think when we talk of horses, that you see them/ Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth' (26–7). The textual horses of Shakespeare's history plays are not only printed on the playscript or in the imaginations of the audience, they are described as 'printing':³ they stamp their message into the 'receiving earth' (27). As warhorses, their hoofs leave the impression of conflict in the soil of the invaded country – a stamped record of war. This image haunts the earlier plays in the tetralogy, when the land trampled by the warhorses in battle is 'this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England' (*RII* 2.1.49). Arriving on the coast of Wales in *Richard II*, Richard addresses the earth directly: 'dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand/though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs' (*RII* 3.2.6–7). Henry IV echoes Richard's imagery in the opening speech of *Henry IV, Part 1*, when he vows:

No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood;
Nor more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor bruise her flowerets with the armed hoofs
Of hostile paces (*I HIV* 1.1.6–10).

The hoof prints of English warhorses doing battle on English soil do not just mark the ground; they wound it, bruise it. Through the 'armed hoofs' of its horses, England damages itself (*I HIV* 1.1.10). By contrast, English horses preparing to do battle on French soil in *Henry V* have 'proud hoofs' and 'high and boastful neighs' (*HV* 1.P.27, *HV* 4.P.10). Through the imagery of horses stamping the ground, Shakespeare draws parallels between horses and national identity. English horses can injure or honour English land and carry English kings to victory or defeat.

As horses can leave prints on the earth, the pastures of different nations can leave distinctive prints on horses. In his article for this

³ While this is the only time the word 'print' is used in the entire *Henriad*, printing metaphors can be found in several of Shakespeare's other plays. See Thompson A. – Thompson J., "Meaning, 'Seeing,' Printing", in Brooks D. (ed.), *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England* (Burlington: 2005).

collection, Ian MacInnes uses geohumoralism to examine the critical significance of horses and pasture land to national character. Similarly, Wendy Wall argues in her article on 'Renaissance National Husbandry' that farmland and husbandry are central to 'creating a national myth of the land, one that called into being national subjects by renaming their activities in terms of the collective unit of Englishness'.⁴ In Shakespeare's history plays, particularly the *Henriad*, looking at the portrayal of horses can provide insight into the ways that Shakespeare constructs national identity. Exploring the way that early modern English history plays conceived and contributed to English nation-building, Peter Womack argues that 'the theatre was inviting its audience not merely to contemplate the "imagined community" but to *be* it'.⁵ For Womack, the army that the Chorus asks the audience to imagine in the Prologue to *Henry V* is a representation of England itself. By using 'imaginary puissance' to 'deck our kings', English audiences participate in fashioning the national identity of England (*Henry V* 1.P.25, 29). While Womack focuses on the way that the audience is asked to imagine Henry and the English soldiers, this speech also asks the audience to think of horses when imagining the mythic battle at Agincourt. Shakespeare consistently returns to the horse as a representation of individual or national character; the armies and communities that he asks his audience to imagine are reflected in their horses.

In *Henry V*, Shakespeare uses horses to illustrate the differences between the French and English armies before the final battle. Baffled by the progress of the English army, the French Constable asks: "Can sodden water, a drench for sur-reined jades, their barley-broth,⁶ decoct their cold blood to such valiant heat?" (*Henry V*, 3.5.18–20). Despite the fact that France is slowly falling to the English army, his words restore the faith of the French king and contribute the overconfidence that characterizes the French throughout the play. When the armies finally meet, the English forces are diseased, exhausted and vastly outnumbered. After sending a spy over to the English camp, the French learn:

⁴ Wall W., "Renaissance National Husbandry: Gervase Markham and the Publication of England", *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27, 3 (1996) 771.

⁵ Womack P., "Imagining Communities", in Aers D. (ed.), *Culture and history, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing* (Detroit: 1992) 138.

⁶ As indicated by Gervase Markham in *How to chuse, ride, trayne, and dyet, both hunting-horses and running horses*, 'sodden barley' was actually the approved feed for an ill horse in England.

The horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
 With torch-staves in their hand; and their poor jades
 Lob down their heads, dropping the hides and hips,
 The gum down-roping from their pale-dead eyes
 And in their pale dull mouths the gimmel bit
 Lies foul with chew'd grass, still and motionless (*Henry V*, 4.2.45–50).

In contrast with Shakespeare's exaggerated description of Petruchio's diseased horse in *The Taming of the Shrew*, the description in this passage gives a more realistic portrayal of equine illness. Sick horses often display 'loss of appetite, extreme weakness and depression [...] and discharges from the eyes'.⁷ Gervase Markham's *How to chuse, ride, trayne, and dyet, both hunting-horses and running horses*,⁸ includes chapters on 'tired horses', 'the falling of the crest', and 'watering eyes [...] blood-shotten eyes, or any other fore-eye, comming of rume of other humour'.⁹ The English horses are described as weakened and diseased in vivid detail that an audience of the time would recognize. The state of the English army is then read through the condition of their horses.

If the French characterize the English horses as weak and listless, worn down by battle, the praise they have for their own horses is nothing short of rapturous. While Orleans is credited with having the 'best horse of Europe' (*Henry V*, 3.7.5), the Dauphin claims that he 'will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns' (*Henry V*, 3.7.11–2). The Dauphin goes on to wax poetic about the worth of his horse:

Nay, the man hath no wit that cannot, from the
 rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb, vary
 deserved praise on my palfrey: it is a theme as
 fluent as the sea: turn the sands into eloquent
 tongues, and my horse is argument for them all:
 'tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for
 a sovereign's sovereign to ride on; and for the
 world, familiar to us and unknown to lay apart
 their particular functions and wonder at him (*Henry V*, 3.7.31–9).

⁷ Enslinger M.E., *Horses and horsemanship*, (Danville: 1990) 269.

⁸ It has been suggested by R. Warwick Bond in the Arden edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* that Markham's first descriptions of equine diseases and cures might have been the source of Shakespeare's portrayal of Petruchio's diseased horse.

⁹ Markham Gervase, *How to chuse, ride, trayne, and dyet, both hunting-horses and running horses* (London, Edward White: 1606) from the British Library copy, also in Early English Books Online 60–72.

The portrait that these words paint is not that of a seasoned war-horse which inspires fear in the enemy. The Dauphin describes his horse as something to praise, to wonder at – not as a horse to take to war. Peter Heaney explains:

Alas, this most significant of horses, this 'prince of palfreys', fit for 'a sovereign's sovereign to ride on', worthy recipient of the sonnets his master addresses to him, is a mere *palfrey*: 'a saddle-horse, as distinguished from a war-horse, *esp.* a small saddle-horse for ladies' So much for the Dauphin's prowess in battle.¹⁰

While the English have driven their warhorses to disease and exhaustion through repeated battles, the French are riding saddle-horses for ladies. Shakespeare conflates the concepts of love and war, woman and horse in this scene when the Dauphin begins a sonnet to his charger, declaring that 'I had rather had my horse than my mistress... my horse is my mistress' (*Henry V*, 3.7.43–4). Whereas the English fighters reject the feminine sphere of courtly love by riding horses rather than wooing women, the French bring courtly love to the battlefield by composing sonnets to their horses. For the French, an army's worth is measured by the beauty of their horses and their armour; it is unthinkable to them that the rough English warriors with their battle-weary horses should triumph.

While the French pay the price for underestimating the English army due to the state of their horses, the opening scenes of *Henry IV, Part 2* prove that one can judge a messenger (and the truth of his message) by the horse he rides. As the play opens, the personification of Rumour appears, describing himself as riding upon the wind as one rides upon a post-horse, travelling from tavern to tavern and spreading untruths. The unreliability of rumour is then demonstrated by actual messengers arriving on horseback to give news to Northumberland, who is desperate to know how his son Hotspur fared at the Battle of Shrewsbury. The first to appear is Lord Bardolph, who swears that he heard from 'one who came from thence' that Hotspur's army has won the day, killing Prince Hal and driving away his allies (2 *Henry IV*, 1.1.25). He is followed by Northumberland's servant Travers, who provides a different story – that Hotspur has been defeated and killed. Lord Bardolph stakes the truth of his knowledge on the speed and strength of his horse: he believes that being 'better horsed', he has

¹⁰ Heaney, "Petruchio's Horse" 2:1.

delivered a more reliable report. Travers counters this by arguing that his report comes from an even more recent source – a messenger who passed him after Lord Bardolph did.

The truth of the account Travers tells is indicated by the description of the messenger's horse. While the man telling the news is hardly mentioned, his horse and his horsemanship dominate Travers' account:

After him came spurring hard
 A gentleman, almost forspent with speed,
 That stopp'd by me to breathe his bloodied horse.
 He ask'd the way to Chester; and of him
 I did demand what news from Shrewsbury:
 He told me that rebellion had bad luck
 And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold (2 *Henry IV*, 1.1.34–42).

The phrases 'spurring hard' and 'almost forspent with speed' give credence to Travers's argument and negate Lord Bardolph's claim; while Bardolph is better horsed than Travers, he has not been travelling at the speed of the messenger Travers encounters. The horse is described as 'bloodied', indicating that the rider put forth such effort to reach his destination quickly that the horse was bleeding from the sharp impressions of spurs in his sides. This image is confirmed when, after briefly telling Travers of Hotspur's death, the messenger:

Gave his able horse the head,
 And bending forward struck his armed heels
 Against the panting sides of his poor jade
 Up to the rowel-head, and starting so
 He seem'd in running to devour the way,
 Staying no longer question (2 *Henry IV*, 1.1.40–55).

The image of a bleeding horse and an exhausted messenger racing across the countryside to bring the true news of the battle is convincing. To discredit Travers's story, Bardolph must discredit the evidence of the horse as much as the rider. He attempts to do so by arguing that the messenger 'was some hilding fellow that had stolen the horse he rode on and spoke at a venture' (2 *Henry IV*, 1.1.66–7), and even offers to stake his barony on the truth of his own message. His attempt falls flat, however, with the arrival of a third messenger, who confirms Travers' story. In times of war, the way a messenger rides his horse serves as a better signifier of truth than the good name of the messenger.

Shakespeare's connections between horses and nations are not limited to the warhorses that carry kings and their armies into battle.

Horses are mentioned just as frequently in scenes depicting provincial life in England. Comparing Gervase Markham's husbandry manuals with *The Faerie Queene*, Wall maintains that there is 'a "lowly" early modern conception of national identity that complemented the "high" georgic national myths promulgated by authors such as Edmund Spenser'.¹¹ In the *Henriad*, Shakespeare gives us the 'high' national myth of Henry V and his triumph over the French at Agincourt. But he does not neglect the 'lowly' English countryside, the tavern, the inn yard. The most practical and sensitive portrayal of horses in the tetralogy (perhaps in all of Shakespeare) comes in Act 2, scene 1 of *Henry IV, Part 1*. The scene takes place in an inn-yard and it opens with two carriers who are loading their pack-horses in the middle of the night. Very little happens to advance the plot; it is the only scene in the play that does not include Henry IV, Hal, Hotspur or Falstaff and it is almost invariably cut from performances of the play. The scene opens with the first carrier calling for the ostler, who responds from within but never appears onstage, to care for their horses, one of whom is named Cut. While this scene is not crucial to the development of the play as a whole, it is a gentle and realistic portrayal of the difficulties of stabling a horse at an inn in troubled times. The first carrier urges the ostler to 'beat Cut's saddle, put a few flocks in the point' because the 'poor jade is wrung in the withers, all out of cess' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.1.6–8). The harsh treatment that Cut appears to be receiving at the hands of Tom the ostler causes the two carriers to mourn the death of Robin, the previous ostler. After the price of oats had risen to a point where he could no longer feed the horses properly, Robin died of grief. In an examination of the inn's now shoddy management and rapid decline, the lodgings of both humans and horses are evaluated and found wanting. While the carriers endure fleabites and urine in the chimneys, the horses must survive on 'peas and beans... as dank as a dog', which is 'the next way to give poor jades the bots' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.1.9–10). The discomforts and diseases of Cut and the other horses are made as real as those of their riders. As the country moves towards a new civil war, even the horses suffer as money becomes strained and prices rise. In a play in which men are defined by the way they relate to their horses, both carriers and Robin the ostler serve as reminders that England's troubles can be seen in its commonest citizens and horses.

¹¹ Wall, "Markham" 767.

Common horses such as Cut, like the horses of the English soldiers in *Henry V*, are a reflection of England itself. The fact that Cut is even given a name is significant. The Dauphin's *cheval volant* is mentioned with admiration, even love, and is granted a higher place in the Dauphin's heart than his mistress, but he is not mentioned by name. Although the horses belonging to characters such as Hal, Hotspur or Falstaff are mentioned repeatedly, they are never named. The only other horse in the tetralogy that is given a name is Barbary – the horse that passes from Richard II to Henry of Bolingbroke when Bolingbroke assumes the throne. Where Barbary is a grand warhorse belonging to two kings, Cut is a pack horse owned by a humble carrier who is hardly worth a 'portrait in horsemanship'. Descriptions of horses such as Barbary and Cut provide justification for John Murray's claim that Shakespeare's horses are 'the noblest description ever written of the noblest of all animals. Here we see the poet at his best, full of personal knowledge of his subject, full of kindest sympathy with it'.¹² Cut and Barbary become the *Henriad*'s equine 'ghost characters': characters who are named and described, but who never appear onstage. They exemplify the 'high' and the 'low' of the English national myth; the carrier's horse and the king's horse reveal the weaknesses and the strengths of England's political and economic climate.

Barbary is essential to Shakespeare's portrayal of the transfer of power between Richard II and Bolingbroke; if a country can be measured by its horses, then a king can be judged by his mount. Henry's triumphant ride on Barbary is a crucial part of his coronation, and a loyal groom who visits Richard in prison gives an account of the procession:

In London streets, that coronation-day,
 ...Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,
 That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,
 That horse that I so carefully have dress'd! (5.5.76–80).

The roan horse Barbary, ridden first by Richard and then by Bolingbroke, is a symbolic representation of kingship. Richard spends much of the play preoccupied with cognate kingship symbols: the crown, the sceptre, the throne, even the sun. One by one Richard sees these symbols, which he considers his 'divine right,' pass from him to

¹² John Murray, quoted in Stead W. (ed.), "The Birds and Beasts of Shakespeare", *The Review of Reviews* 9 (London: 1894) 469.

Bolingbroke. Hearing that Bolingbroke has ridden on Barbary, Richard wishes for Barbary to 'fall, and break the neck of that proud man that did usurp his back' (5.5.88–9). In the coronation procession, Barbary is both horse and throne; Henry can 'usurp' both, and claim the kingdom. For both Richard and the groom, the act of riding Barbary instills kingship in Henry, marking the shift in power as much as the coronation itself.

Barbary functions as more than simply a possession; he takes an active role in accepting the new king. As a king's horse, Barbary should instinctively recognize his master. In his essay "Of Steeds, called in French Destriers", Montaigne cites the story of Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, who 'suffered no man to get-on and sit him but his master'¹³ as evidence not only of Alexander's skill in horsemanship but also of his skill in leadership. In *Richard II*, Barbary is placed in the role of Bucephalus and given the chance to accept or reject a new master. Upon hearing the groom's description of the procession, Richard asks, 'rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend, how went he under him?' (5.5.81–2). The groom's answer is 'so proudly as if he disdained the ground' (5.5.83). In *The Defence of Poesie*, Philip Sidney recalls his riding master, Pugliano, explaining that a horse is 'the only serviceable courtier without flattery',¹⁴ an image that also surfaces in Alciati's *Emblemata*. The title of Alciati's *Emblem* 35,¹⁵ which depicts a horse and rider, is "In adulari nescientem", which means "On one who does not know how to flatter".¹⁶ A horse cannot flatter¹⁷ a royal rider out of hope of social advancement; instead, a horse recognizes the true strength and leadership of his rider. With the court and the people turning against him in favour of Bolingbroke, Richard sees Barbary as just another disloyal subject. But as a horse, Barbary recognizes authority and skill in Bolingbroke. Richard is no Alexander, and

¹³ Florio J. (transl.), *The essayes of Michael lord of Montaigne* (London: 1908), vol. I, 395.

¹⁴ Sidney Philip, *The Defense of Poesy*, ed. A.S. Cook (Boston: 1890) 1.

¹⁵ Alciati's *Emblem* 35 also links ruling a country with riding a horse. The epigram below the image of the horse and rider explains that 'the region of Thessaly so often changes masters' because 'like a high-spirited steed it shakes from its back every groom who does not know how to control it' (transl. by Daly, Callahan and Cuttler).

¹⁶ Alciatus, Andreas (Alciati, Andrea), *Index Emblematicus*, eds. P.M. Daly et al. (Toronto: 1985) 253.

¹⁷ In Dando John – Runt Harry (pseuds.) *Maroccus Extacticus or Bankes Bay Horse in a Trance* (London, Cuthbert Burby: 1595). The horse Marocco describes himself as one who does not flatter.

Bolingbroke is received as Barbary's new sovereign and master rather than as usurper.

Richard initially sees Barbary's acceptance of Bolingbroke as a betrayal, bitterly condemning him for being 'so proud that Bolingbroke was on his back' and lamenting that 'that jade hath ate bread from my royal hand, this hand hath made him proud with clapping him' (5.5.84–6). Almost as soon as he accuses him, however, Richard forgives the horse his treason, asking:

Forgiveness, horse! Why do I rail on thee,
Since thou, created to be awed by man,
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse;
And yet I bear a burthen like an ass,
Spurr'd, gall'd and tired by jouncing Bolingbroke (5.5.90–5).

It is through his comments on Barbary that Richard acknowledges his own defeat. This passage represents the only moment in the tetralogy where one man admits that he has been 'ridden' and 'broken' by another. In a tetralogy where riders are predominantly male, it is emasculating for Richard to stop imagining himself as a rider and take on the role of the mount: 'spurr'd, gall'd and tired by jouncing Bolingbroke' (5.5.95).¹⁸ Examining Richard's language in other aspects of this scene, Jonathan Hart argues that 'in prison, alone [...] the fallen king is both male and female'.¹⁹ Similarly, the equine imagery shifts Richard from rider to ridden, from masculine to feminine, from king to prisoner.

Shakespeare also connects equine mythography to the conventional association of the sun with English kingship by referencing the sun god Helios, whose chariot is pulled by fiery golden horses. In *Richard II*, after believing through much of the play that his kinship is golden and that his 'face, like the sun, [does] make beholders wink', Richard finally realizes towards the end of Act III that he is not Helios. Instead, he takes on the role of 'glistening Phaeton, wanting the manage of unruly jades' (3.3.178–9). As he later uses Barbary to signal the transfer of power to Bolingbroke, Richard uses the fiery horses of Helios's chariot to consider his own divine right to the throne. By comparing himself

¹⁸ The female/horse, male/rider image is not unique to Shakespeare's history plays. In Roberts J., *The Shakespearean Wild: Geography, Genus, and Gender* (Lincoln, NE: 1991) 107, the author explains a centaur metaphor from *King Lear* by clarifying that 'horse/rider images are standard representations of male/female relationships' (107).

¹⁹ Hart J., *Shakespeare: Poetry, History, and Culture* (New York: 2009) 135.

not to the sun god but to the mortal child of the sun god, who cannot control the blazing horses and crashes them into the earth, Richard admits his own failings as a ruler. His Phaeton-like mismanagement of England's government serves to define his character through the imagery of mismanaging horses. The Duke of York's description of Bolingbroke's coronation ride on a 'hot and fiery steed' comes shortly after Richard's lament that he has crashed the chariot of the sun. It is possible to see Barbary symbolically as one of Helios's horses marking Bolingbroke as the new sun king.

Shakespeare's references to associations between the English throne, the sun and horsemanship extend to the next play in the tetralogy: *Henry IV, Part 1*. Hal, the 'nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales' (*1 Henry IV*, 4.1.95), who grows up to become 'warlike Harry' (*Henry V*, Prologue, line 5), initially gives the appearance of being another Phaeton. At the end of *Richard II*, when the newly crowned Bolingbroke asks for news of his 'unthrifty son', he learns that Hal's initial reaction to his father's coronation is to declare that:

He would unto the stews,
And from the common'st creature pluck a glove,
And wear it as a favour; and with that
He would unhorse the lustiest challenger (*Richard II*, 5.3.1–19).

Hal's flippant response is in keeping with his characterization in *Henry IV, Part 1*; he walks a fine line between nobility and depravity. With these lines, a connection is established between Hal's role as the prince and his actions on horseback (here in joust, later in battle). Throughout *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*, Hal 'courts' the commoners, shirking his royal responsibilities by passing his time in taverns and brothels. While his behaviour seems 'dissolute and desperate' to the king, Hal's promise to 'unhorse the lustiest challenger' is enough to make the king see 'some sparks of better hope, which elder years may happily bring forth' (*Richard II*, 5.3.20–22).

It is through Hal's horsemanship that these 'sparks of better hope' begin to shine through for the other characters to see. While the audience knows of Hal's plans to 'imitate the sun' and emerge from the 'base, contagious clouds' (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.220–1) in all of his glory, the characters are, for the most part, unaware of his intentions. Even the king has little more than Hal's promise to 'be more myself' and to 'redeem all this on Percy's head' (*1 Henry IV*, 3.2.93, 132). So it comes as a surprise to the opposing army when Vernon exclaims:

I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,
 His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd
 Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
 And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
 As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds,
 To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus (*1 Henry IV*, 4.1.104–10).

It is at this moment that Hal's promise to imitate the sun, which does not fully take effect until *Henry V*, begins to come to fruition. In the face of an existence that, in Hotspur's words, 'daffed the world aside and bid it pass' (*1 Henry IV*, 4.1.96–7), the single act of leaping into a saddle like a divine being ready for battle indicates a dramatic change. Vernon describes Hal as a rider who could 'witch the world with noble horsemanship', causing even the opposing army to look favourably on him (*1 Henry IV*, 4.1.11). Hal's horsemanship outshines his cloudy reputation, and he is measured not by his past action but by the beautiful figure he cuts as he rides into battle. In Alciati's *Emblemata*, 'the image of a rider mastering a horse was popularized as a symbol of rulership'.²⁰ The act of mastering a powerful warhorse is equated with mastering a rebellious country and Hal's 'portrait in horsemanship' marks him as a potential ruler.

It is significant that in Vernon's description of Hal as 'an angel dropp'd down from the clouds/ to turn and wind a fiery Pegasus' (*1 Henry IV*, 4.1.104–10), any mention on Bellerophon, Pegasus' rider, is conspicuously absent. In his note on Jonson's appropriation of the Pegasus myth, John Steadman suggests that early-modern authors 'may have been influenced by pejorative interpretations of the Bellerophon myth' because 'his tragic fall from his winged steed in attempting to scale heaven had made him a conventional symbol for ambition and overweening arrogance'.²¹ Particularly after the Phaeton metaphor suggests that Richard has come crashing down to earth as a result of his own hubris, any association between Hal and Bellerophon might have unfortunate connotations. Instead, Shakespeare casts Hal in the mixed metaphor of a Christian angel on a Pagan horse.²² Shakespeare's

²⁰ Liedtke W.A. – Moffitt J.F., "Velázquez, Olivares, and the Baroque Equestrian Portrait", *The Burlington Magazine*, 123, 942 (1981) 535.

²¹ Steadman J.M., "Perseus upon Pegasus and Ovid Moralized", *The Review of English Studies*, new series 9, 36 (1958) 409.

²² William Blake's watercolor *Fiery Pegasus* (1809) cites and adapts Shakespeare's mixed metaphor by depicting a figure dropping from a cloud to the back of a rearing

adjustment of the myth, like Jonson's, ensures that the rider of Pegasus is glorified rather than condemned.

The reference to Pegasus in this scene is revisited in *Henry V* when the Dauphin, Henry's rival for the French throne, compares his horse to Pegasus. The Dauphin refers to his horse as 'the cheval volant', explaining that 'it is a beast for Perseus' (*Henry V*, 3.7.14, 20). The speaker in *Henry IV, Part 1* is Vernon, an observer who is associated with Hotspur and the rebels. If there is any bias in the description, one would expect it to be against Hal rather than in favour of him. Therefore, when Vernon gives his glowing praise, the picture of the prince becomes even more majestic when seen through the filter of his eyes. By contrast, the Dauphin compares his own horse to Pegasus and himself to Perseus. Rather than receiving praise effortlessly, as Hal does, the Dauphin must fish for compliments among his own followers. Orleans even cuts off one of the glowing tributes to the horse by saying 'no more, cousin' (*Henry V*, 3.7.30). The depiction of Hal as the rider of Pegasus sets up a rise to power and glory in battle, but the Dauphin's attempt to claim the title for himself is yet another example of French overconfidence.

Horsemanship is also a key factor in the way that Hal defeats his earlier rival, Hotspur. Upon hearing that Hal has awed everyone by taking a perfect leap into his saddle, Hotspur responds:

Come, let me taste my horse,
 Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt
 Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales:
 Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,
 Meet and ne'er part till one drop down a corse
 (*1 Henry IV*, 4.1.119–124).

In the literal sense, this is misleading. If Hotspur is borne 'like a thunderbolt' by his steed, we cannot see it onstage, and the call for Hotspur to 'taste his horse' is simply another exit line, indicating that when Hotspur leaves the stage shortly, he will mount his famous roan horse. In another sense, however, the two men do take each other on 'hot horse to horse' because their battle is a battle of reputations. As indicated by his name, Hotspur's reputation is built on the image of an armed knight riding on a warhorse and Hal hopes to win Hotspur's

horse that leaps from a rocky cliff and calling the picture 'A spirit vaulting from a cloud to turn and wind a fiery Pegasus' (*Shakespeare Illustrated*).

glory by defeating him in combat. When the two warriors clash in a battle to determine who will emerge with the honours of the other, they are indeed competing 'hot horse to horse' for the right to the honour and glory they both earn on horseback.

It is easy to see Hotspur's core character in his horsemanship. Even his name puts him firmly on the back of a horse, spurring it forward, rushing in; he lives life as though he were charging into battle. When he asks his servants to bring out his roan horse, he proudly declares, 'that roan shall be my throne' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.3.73). Although Henry IV mentions more than once that he believes Hotspur is more deserving of the throne than Hal, it becomes apparent to the audience over the course of the play that the most fitting throne for Hotspur is his warhorse. Hotspur is not a politician; he has no patience with throne-room etiquette and he can hardly remain on civil terms with his allies. Paul Jorgensen cites Hotspur's impatience as evidence of his 'inability to command jointly with any person emotionally more mature than a Douglas', and argues that 'in pleading for immediate battle, Hotspur is obviously ill-advised'.²³ The impatience that characterizes his commanding strategy is also apparent in his riding, since Hotspur is constantly calling for his roan horse. Whether he is departing from his home or dashing off to battle, Hotspur repeatedly announces his need to leave the stage and take to horse. While Hal's horsemanship wins him respect and honour, his talent for leadership is also apparent when he leaves the battlefield, where he demonstrates a patience that Hotspur lacks. From the throne of his saddle, Hotspur is a powerful figure but off his horse he is hotheaded and ineffectual.

Like statues of mounted riders, most of Shakespeare's portraits in horsemanship are direct or indirect references to war. Hal's leap into the saddle takes place before a battle, and Bolingbroke's triumphant ride on Barbary is a demonstration of his military victory over Richard. In each of the plays, the cry of 'to horse, to horse!' is the undeniable equivalent of 'to war, to war!' It appears again and again, from Lord Ross's battle call in *Richard II* to the Dauphin's '*Montez a cheval!* My horse!' in Act IV of *Henry V*. Montjoy's grisly description of the French corpses left on the battlefield focuses more on the equine casualties than the men: 'their wounded steeds/ Fret fetlock deep in gore

²³ Jorgensen P.A., "Divided Command in Shakespeare", *PMLA* 70, 4 (1955) 755–756.

and with wild rage/ Jerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,/ Killing them twice' (*Henry V* 4.7.77–80). When Henry Bolingbroke seeks a reprieve from banishment, Northumberland pleads that 'on thy royal party granted once his glittering arms will he commend to rust, his barbed steeds to stables and his heart in faithful service of your majesty' (*Richard II*, III:iii:115–7). Just as leaping on a horse is tantamount to war, stabling an armoured horse is a call to peace. War excludes women in this tetralogy even more emphatically than it does in the rest of Shakespeare's histories – these plays do not have a Joan or a Margaret (or even a Constance or an Eleanor). The masculine sphere of warhorses and battlefields occupied by characters such as Hal and Hotspur has its foil in the more domestic and feminine spaces occupied by characters such as the princess Katharine and Hotspur's wife, Kate.²⁴ Preferring war to peace is often shown as a choice of horses over women.

Hotspur, in particular, rejects the female sphere in favour of war and his horse. As Hal jokes, Hotspur is a man who tells his wife 'give my roan horse a drench' if she asks him 'O my sweet Harry [...] how many hast thou killed today?' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.4.119–20). Hal's comment is an apt description of Hotspur's encounter with his wife, Kate, in the previous scene. Unlike Hotspur, who speaks in short bursts, Kate takes over twenty-five lines to explain her concerns upon being 'a banished woman from my Harry's bed' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.3.42). Rather than answer her, Hotspur calls repeatedly for his roan horse. When she pursues him further, asking 'what carries you away?' Hotspur again deflects his wife by replying 'my horse, my love, my horse' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.3.78–9). When she asks 'do you love me?' he responds with the question 'wilt thou see me ride?' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.3.103–5). He would rather ride a horse than a woman, just as he would rather 'crack crowns' than 'tilt

²⁴ Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin draw attention to the fact that both Hotspur's wife and the French princess share the same name by referencing *The Taming of the Shrew*: 'To a student of history, it would also be surprising that both women are called Kate. The historical wife of Hotspur was named Elizabeth, Hall gives her the name Elinor, and Holinshed writes it as Elianor [...] Shakespeare's renaming of Hotspur's wife anticipates the English diminutive by which the victorious Henry V will domesticate the French princess Katherine, but it also recalls the most notable of all Shakespearean prototypes of a woman tamed, Katherine Minola. Already domesticated when we meet her, Hotspur's wife is never called anything but Kate; but in *The Taming of the Shrew*, as in *Henry V*, the appellation is specifically identified as an act of domestication'. See Howard J.E. – Rackin P., *Engendering a Nation* (London: 1997) 192.

with lips' (1 *Henry IV*, 2.3.95–6). J.L. Simmons argues that Hotspur's 'resistance to his wife' comes with an immaturity and a resistance to anything that 'threatens the frontiers of what he considers the only true gender'.²⁵ Hotspur is an essentially masculine figure who prefers the throne of his warhorse to the bed of his wife. In his article about Petruchio's ridiculously diseased horse in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Heaney links equine management with household management. He ties in the excessive illness of the horse with the 'disorder' in Petruchio's home, where 'the master strikes and kicks his servants, wholesome food is thrown wantonly about, the natural functions of eating and sleeping are denied to Katherine, the conjugal bed made a place of disturbance and unrest'.²⁶ Heaney describes the horse as a reflection of his master, just as the English and French armies are characterized through their horses. Hotspur's management of wife and horse inverts the dynamic established in *The Taming of the Shrew*, however. Hotspur neglects his wife and household and instead turns his attention to his horse and the war. His behaviour is a blatant rejection of the feminine world of love, home and intimacy for the masculine world of war and horses.

In the betrothal scene in *Henry V*, Shakespeare revisits the idea that giving too much attention to war (and therefore horses) leaves a man unprepared to deal with matters of love (and therefore women). Henry presents himself as a soldier, prepared to do battle for land rather than hearts, even blaming the moment of his conception for his rough looks and manners:

Now, beshrew
 my father's ambition! He was thinking of civil wars
 when he got me: therefore was I created with a
 stubborn outside, with an aspect of iron, that, when
 I come to woo ladies, I fright them (*Henry V* 5.2.225–9).

When his early attempts at wooing the French princess by comparing her to an angel are met with confusion, Henry drops any remnant of flowery speech. Instead, he speaks to her plainly, stating that he would be more adept at winning a wife 'by vaulting into my saddle with my armour on my back' (*Henry V*, 5.2.139). This statement might reference Vernon's description of Hal winning hearts of soldiers with

²⁵ Simmons J.L., "Masculine Negotiations in Shakespeare's History Plays: Hal, Hotspur, and 'the Foolish Mortimer'", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44, 4 (1993) 449.

²⁶ Heaney, "Petruchio's Horse" 2.5.

a stunning leap into his saddle in armour but it also has a bawdier connotation that equates mounting a horse and a woman. The link between the wife and the horse is only intensified when Henry goes on to say 'I should quickly leap into a wife [...] I could lay on like a butcher and sit like a jack-an-apes, never off' (*Henry V*, 5.2.140). Even Henry's tamer suggestion that he 'might buffet for my love, or bound my horse for her favours' (*Henry V*, 5.2.141) is reminiscent of his off-stage boast in *Richard II* that he might take a favour from a prostitute and win the tournament for her (putting the French princess in unfortunate company). This imagery is unusually bestial for a betrothal scene and women are set up as more like horses than riders, more like animals than men.

The references to riding in this scene serve as a reminder and re-deployment of Richard's horse/rider metaphor at the end of *Richard II*. Like Bolingbroke, Henry is depicted as a conqueror and a rider, while the defeated Richard and Katharine are figuratively 'ridden.' Readings of this scene have emphasized the objectification of Katharine, particularly the way that the sexual overtones of Henry's 'rapacious wooing'²⁷ mirror the way that the French country has been ravaged by English soldiers. Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin point to the 'association of rape with military conquest' and note that 'victories won on the battlefield will be ratified in marriage [...] to ensure the bridegroom's sovereignty'.²⁸ Pointing to Katharine's dual roles as a bride-to-be and a spoil of war, Claire McEachern argues:

Perhaps the most potent fantasy of unity and, simultaneously, the most violent purification of the body from the body politic are proposed in the unification of England and France through the union of Henry and Katharine: "the paction of these kingdoms," as the Queen of France puts it, in "the bed of blessed marriage" (5.2.363–64).²⁹

While the connections between Katharine's body and France itself have been examined in depth by other critics, I argue that the interjection of riding metaphors gives an added dimension to the scene. As in the earlier plays in the tetralogy, where horses are used to reference the land itself, the final scene of *Henry V* puts Katharine in the roles

²⁷ McEachern C., "Henry V and the Paradox of the Body Politic", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45, 1 (1994) 33.

²⁸ Howard-Rackin *Engendering a Nation* 200.

²⁹ McEachern, "Henry V" 49.

of tamed woman, conquered land and broken horse. Just as Alciati draws a parallel between conquering a rebellious city and controlling a powerful horse, Shakespeare presents Katharine as both nation and horse to demonstrate Henry's control.

In his examination of 'Shakespeare's Birds and Beasts', John Murray states, 'Of Shakespeare's horses there is no need to speak: he writes of them as a Centaur might write, as participating in his own nature. He loved them'.³⁰ I believe that the very 'love' and 'sympathy' that Murray notes serve as a reason 'to speak' about Shakespeare's portrayal of horses. Just as Shakespeare's contempt for dogs has led to studies of characters and image-clusters in many of his plays,³¹ Shakespeare's love of horses provides a critical matrix for understanding the *Henriad*. Characters judge one another by their horsemanship throughout the plays, and men become kings simply by leaping into a saddle. From Barbary the king's warhorse to Cut the lowly carrier's horse, the horses of the *Henriad* function as characters and symbols. Even without appearing onstage, Shakespeare's horses give us valuable insight into their riders, allowing audiences to truly know his characters by their horses.

³⁰ John Murray, quoted in Stead W. (ed.), "The Birds and Beasts of Shakespeare", *The Review of Reviews* 9 (London: 1894) 469.

³¹ See the work of William Empson and Caroline Spurgeon, among others.

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‘THE AUTHOR OF THEIR SKILL’:
HUMAN AND EQUINE UNDERSTANDING IN THE DUKE
OF NEWCASTLE’S ‘NEW METHOD’

Elaine Walker

For it is a false assertion that the sense of man is the
measure of things.

Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*

William Cavendish, first Duke of Newcastle (1593–1676), believed that ‘there is nothing of more Use than A Horse of Mannage; nor any thing of more State, Manliness, or Pleasure, than Riding; and as it is the Noblest, so it is the Healthfullest Exercise in the World’.¹ Throughout his life, Newcastle put this belief into practice, devoting time, money and faith to his love of horses and the art of the riding house, or *manège*, through which the soldier’s battle-field skills took on new refinement. He published two horsemanship manuals, in 1658 and 1667, setting down his pleasure in horses, riding and the symbolism of noble display to establish his ideal pattern for a worthy tradition.

These two books on the rearing, training and management of the ‘horse of mannage’, the ancestor of today’s dressage horse, are the only seminal texts on horsemanship ever produced by an English author. They also stand apart from those of his peers, due to his sophisticated understanding of both the human and equine mind and the way in which this led to a more thoughtful and progressive method. A century later Françoise de la Guérinière, perhaps the most influential of the classical horsemanship authors, declared that Newcastle was ‘the greatest expert of his age’ and that this would be the ‘unanimous sentiment of all connoisseurs’.²

¹ Cavendish William, *A New Method, and Extraordinary Invention, to Dress Horses* (London, Thomas Milbourn: 1667) 13–14. Further references to Newcastle’s manuals will be included in the text using the date of publication, followed by the page number.

² de la Guérinière François Robichon, *School of Horsemanship*, transl. by Tracey Boucher (London: 1994) 87.



Fig. 1. Newcastle and his horse performing the Croupade in a volte (circle of approx. 10 metres) on the left rein. Abraham von Diepenbeke, engraved plate number 35 from John Brindley's 1737 reprint of *La Methode Nouvelle et Invention Extraordinaire de dresser les Chevaux* (1658). Image © Elaine Walker

Newcastle's skill with horses helped clarify many of the tensions of his life and the manuals offer insight into a complex man with a strong urge for self-expression.³ While they are significant in the development of horsemanship literature, they include a biographical subtext found as much in the training method as in the underlying philosophy. To appreciate the value of Newcastle's manuals fully is to be aware that the symbolic importance of horsemanship was rooted in the needs of a practical skill requiring a high level of knowledge. Therefore, the method and its execution are bound to the political and philosophical ideas from which they were born and neither can be fully understood without reference to the other.⁴

The first manual, *La Methode Nouvelle et Invention extraordinaire de dresser les Chevaux* (Antwerp: 1658), was published in French⁵ for the Continental rider and set out to gracefully supersede the methods of Antoine de Pluvinet, whose posthumous manual of 1623 had greatly refined the approach of earlier masters. The text and engravings define Newcastle, though exiled in Antwerp in 1658, as an English lord, a 'tres-puissant prince', while the activity of the riding house provided a cultural point of contact with the Continental elite, for whom it had become 'a substitute, non-military venue for the display of *vertu*'.⁶

Newcastle's second manual, *A New Method, and Extraordinary Invention, to Dress Horses* (London: 1667), was a different, though closely related, text published in English 'for the more particular Satisfaction of my Country-men' (1667: 4). This manual openly undermined what Newcastle perceived to be the continued reliance of English writers upon Sir Thomas Blundeville's adapted translations of Federico Grisone's text of 1550, *Gli Ordini di cavalcare*,⁷ by then over

³ For a detailed consideration of Newcastle's character as revealed through his writing, see my book, Walker E., *To Amaze the People with Pleasure and Delight: the horsemanship manuals of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle* (Kentucky: 2010), 34–65.

⁴ Like Newcastle, I 'have Practised, and Studyed Horse-manship ever since I was ten years old' (1667: 41) and much of my exploration of his technique has been undertaken on horseback to assess its practicality.

⁵ All quotations from Newcastle's first manual of 1658 are footnoted from the English translation which forms Vol.1 of *A General System of Horsemanship* (London, J. Brindley: 1743).

⁶ Tucker T.J., 'Early Modern French Noble Identity and the Equestrian "Airs Above the Ground"', in Raber K. – Tucker T.J. (eds), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (New York: 2005) 293.

⁷ Sir Thomas Blundeville's *A Newe Booke containing the Arte of Ryding and breaking greate Horses* (London, Willyam Seres: 1560) was revised and expanded as *The*

a hundred years old. Once he, like his monarch, was 'restored' to his home, Newcastle was keen to record the way in which the Continental nobility had accepted his own ideas on an art rooted in Italy. Each manual is therefore defined not by the time in which it was written, but by the high points of the previous era in Newcastle's life. Even so, both set out to establish his 'New Method' as more current than those most widely accepted at the time of publication among a particular readership.

Newcastle published his manuals during a period when the art of the riding house was a highly desirable accomplishment for a nobleman, yet one surrounded by tension, due to its decorative, rather than military, nature. Boehrer argues that, 'in its capacity as an aristocratic signifier, the horse attests to the fact that pleasure has increasingly become the business of the privileged ranks'.⁸ That horsemanship's worth came under considerable question is evident in both Newcastle's manuals, and he entered the debate in characteristically emphatic style. The 1667 chapter entitled, 'That it is a very Impertinent Error, and of Great prejudice, to think the Mannage Useless' (1667: 5) follows his 1658 observation that those who misunderstand the value of these highly-trained horses, for war, leisure or any other purpose, simply reveal that 'ne sont bons eux mesmes à quoy que ce soit' (1658: 'Avant-Propos').⁹

The difficulty of the riding-house art meant that horse-masters, who could train both horse and rider with confidence and authority, enjoyed a high profile and a devoted following. In 1573, Claudio Corte wrote, 'The professors of this art truly deserve higher praise than those who teach any other art in the world',¹⁰ while Sir Philip Sidney's riding master, John Pietro Pugliano, a pupil of Grisone, taught that horsemen 'were the Maisters of warre, and ornaments of peace; speedy goers, and strong abiders; triumphers both in Camps and Courts'.¹¹ For the contributions of the most influential horse-masters to be immortalised in print became an additional mark of importance and success.

four chiefst offices belongyng to Horsemanship (London, Willyam Seres: 1565) and had run to six reprints by 1609.

⁸ Boehrer B., "Shakespeare and the Social Devaluation of the Horse", in Raber – Tucker, *The Culture of the Horse* 98.

⁹ 'are good for nothing themselves' (1743: p. 14).

¹⁰ Corte Claudio, *Il cavallerizzo* (Venice: 1573) sig. b2^v.

¹¹ Watson E.P., (ed.), *The Defence of Poesie, Astrophil and Stella and Other Writings* (London: 1997) 83.

From 1550 onwards, at least twenty different manuals that dealt specifically with riding as an art were circulating across Europe. While there are a small number of key texts, the greater proportion of them are derivative works, essentially tributes to a great horse-master or his followers, with little claim to originality. Frustration with this practice led Newcastle to state emphatically that, 'my Book is stolen out of no Book, nor any mans Practice but my own' and with characteristic self-confidence, add 'it is the Best that hath been Writ yet' (1667: 13–14). This was no idle boast, as, while Newcastle's manuals show a through-line in the development of ideas, they are not derivative and are entirely practical, a questionable point in some earlier manuals. He was an innovator in his step-by-step approach from the horse's earliest handling to its highest level of accomplishment. He also introduced equipment and exercises to develop lateral flexibility which were entirely new. Most important as a mark of originality, however, is the way he used the natural instincts of the horse to follow confident leadership as a key factor in his approach.¹²

Newcastle introduces his 1658 manual with a lengthy discussion on the horse's intelligence and powers of understanding, using the work of Thomas Hobbes and René Descartes as points of reference and supporting his arguments from his own experience. In the 1667 manual, he recalls with pride that visitors to his riding house declared, 'my Horses were such, that they wanted nothing of Reasonable Creatures, but Speaking' (1667: sig. b2). Not only the texts of both manuals but also the letters of dedication and the engraved plates of 1658 reveal a carefully considered and consistent stance on the horse's nature through analogies with the human mind and perceptions.

In the 1658 introductory discussion, Newcastle declares that:

Nous n'avons que deux choses pour dresser un cheval parfaitement, qui sont, l'espérance de la récompense, & la crainte du châtiment, lesquelles gouvernent le monde. Et nous ne sçavons pas que Dieu ait autre chose pour éguillonner son peuple a la vertu, que la libéralité de ses salaires infiniz, & l'horreur des peines préparées à leur forfaits (1658: 'Avant-Propos').¹³

¹² For further discussion of the practicality of Newcastle's methods compared with those suggested by followers of Grisone, see Walker, *To Amaze the People* 90–139.

¹³ 'There are but two things that can make an accomplish'd horse, viz. the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment, which all the world are influenc'd by; and as far as we know, God has no other means of exciting his people to virtue, but by the

This analogy sets out his philosophy both for the training of the horse and the behaviour of the man towards it and form the central motif for all that follows. As an ardent royalist, believing passionately in the hierarchical model of leadership typified in the monarchy, Newcastle's relationship with his horses supported and underpinned all he believed in. As he states repeatedly, his practical experience qualified him to make these observations for the benefit of others. Also, he addresses a riding readership, who would not only share his love of the riding-house but understand that, 'Il n'y a rien de semblage par pais, ou aux recontres publiques, soit pour l'usage, soit pour l'honneur' (1658: 'Mes Tres-Chers Fils').¹⁴

Locating the nature of both usefulness and honour had changed from the earlier manuals. The art of the riding-house elevated each rider to authority over a creature easily able to kill him by superior strength. Attempting to subdue that strength by sheer force was, in Newcastle's view, inviting not only danger and violence as a response, but also reducing the man to the level of an animal. To work with the horse and gain his co-operation by means of strong but moderated authority reinforced the image of the rider as an artist, whose skill and perception make him the natural leader.

Newcastle argues that through interaction with the horse, man can experience a relationship that gives him the responsibilities and power that echo God's relationship with mankind. Even so, he insists that winning the horse's trust requires firm discipline and should not imply indulgence because, 'Fear doth Much; Love, Little' so the horse 'must Fear me, and out of that Fear, Love me, and so Obey me.' This is akin to the fear man feels for God, so is linked with respect, the acceptance of authority and the expectation of swift but just punishment, 'And thus they will Chuse the Reward and Shun the Punishment' (1667: p. 196). While he does not explicitly discuss the reclamation of a relationship lost with the Fall, this is implicit in his interest in establishing an appropriate understanding between man and the horse, which renders the violent means proposed by others unnecessary. Thus, infuriated by the methods laid out in Sir Thomas Blundeville's adaptations

largeness of his infinite rewards, and the terror of the pains that are prepar'd for their crimes' (1743: p. 12).

¹⁴ 'There is nothing to rival it in peacetime or at public meetings, either from a point of view of usefulness or honour.' Translated in Walker, *To Amaze the People* 219.

of Grisone, he declares, 'He would have Us to Strike a Horse with a Cudgel or Rod, between the Ears, and upon the Head; which is Abominable, though he thinks it a Rare Secret.' (1667: 22–23).

While Blundeville's advice always starts with a quiet approach, coaxing and 'continually cherishing him with your hand', if the horse does not understand or co-operate then beating him violently until he submits is the next step.¹⁵ To Newcastle, it is not the beating that offends so much as the pointlessness of it, because more thoughtful ways yield better results. He explains that 'I seldom Beat them, but when I meet with great Resistance, and that Rarely'. His approach is based largely on the calm assertion of his will upon the horse, which he describes as 'Force' and in response, 'they Obey willingly, for the most part; and however, all Yeeld, and Render themselves at last' (1667: p. 42). This reflects an understanding of a horse's acceptance of confident leadership that is part of its nature as a herd animal and commonly understood today. Firm discipline, therefore, does not necessarily imply violence but a calm insistence and confidence in eventual results.

His irritation at methods that will make the horse 'Ten times Worse' (1667: 19) seems rooted both in the desire to 'dresser un cheval parfaitement' but also frustration at the way in which man reveals his own shortcomings by beating and spurring a horse that is 'tout à fait ignorant du Manège' (1658: 'Avant-Propos').¹⁶ Through insight into the horse's mind, not as that of an equal, but certainly as that of a thinking creature, Newcastle believes that man himself shows independence and courage. A right relationship with his horse ennobles man by giving god-like authority over a creature whose own worthiness of spirit and intelligence reflect the rider's skill.

Man does not rebel against God if he trusts God's judgement and wisdom, and if he rebels through needless arrogance, that judgement and wisdom will assert itself righteously. When man shows similar judgement and wisdom, he too will be served without rebellion. If a young or ignorant horse, or one with a passionate spirit, does rebel, 'un bon Cavalier ne doit jamais se mettre en cholere contre son cheval, mais le châtier san le fâcher comme un espece de Divinité au dessus de luy'. Like God, the horseman must mete out justice tempered with dispassion. Then the horse will, 'prendra tout en bonne part, & ne se

¹⁵ Blundeville, *The Foure Chiefest Offices*, Book II, 4.

¹⁶ 'make an accomplish'd horse'; 'entirely undressed or untaught' (1743: 12, 11).

fâchera jamais' (1658: 'Avant-Propos').¹⁷ This refers to the fact that a horse, once it accepts the leadership of its rider or another member of its herd, is more secure and settled in itself. This cannot be achieved by violence which would result only in a cowed and resentful animal, likely to explode into greater violence eventually, even if it may seem subdued. But a true rider understands this and Newcastle states that it is fear in man that refuses to allow intelligence to horses. He knows that an inconsistent or poor rider, 'shall Spoil your horse, let him do what he will; because he wants Art' (1667: 199), an astute statement, revealing his insight into man's need for intellectual as well as physical domination.

Once this relationship is established, the rider must be free with praise and sparing with punishment, without ever losing that respect. It is always important that the horse should know when he has done wrong and when he has redeemed himself by compliance so, 'when they do Well, I Cherish and Reward them' (1667: 198). While he has little good to say of previous authors in general, on this subject he agrees with them:

Pluvinel, and most of the Great Masters in Horse-manship, Praise always Gentleness, and Flatteries, and making much of the Horses, either by Clapping, Stroking them, or speaking Flatteringly unto them, or giving them some Reward to Eat: And Pluvinel sayes, One ought to be a Prodigal in Caressing, and making much of them, and a Niggard in Corrections, and careful not to offend them; and that there is not other way to Dress Horses but this (1667: 197).

The idea that a horse appreciates 'cherishing' was not new and Newcastle's ideas on the matter are little different to those of other writers, though he shows less emotion than either Thomas Bedingfield or Nicholas Morgan. While Bedingfield suggests that the rider should aim to, 'make him be in love with you',¹⁸ Morgan is by far the most indulgent in his advice, due to his feeling that through the Fall man is responsible for any disobedience in the horse. He claims that it is wrong 'to punish him for ignorance' and that given kindness and consideration the horse, 'with a sweet smile inherent in nature and expressed in countenance' will, 'seem[eth] naturally to fawne on you to gaine your

¹⁷ 'put himself in a passion with his horse, but chastise him with a kind of divinity superior to him...take all in good part, and never be offended' (1743: 13–14).

¹⁸ Bedingfield Thomas, *The Art of Riding* (London, H. Denham: 1584) 95.

love'.¹⁹ De Pluvinel believes that 'horses can obey and understand us only through the diligence of caresses...But when they behave badly one must chastise them vigorously'.²⁰

Morgan aside, no author suggests that love precludes firm chastisement, and it is one of the anomalies of the Grisone method that his followers believed that violent discipline could teach the horse to love his master and his work. Newcastle's approach differs in advising that 'a bold stroke' should come only after lengthy patient effort and never be applied to a horse which is afraid, because he realises that confrontation, 'Astonishes the Weak Horse...makes a Furious horse Madd; makes a Resty Horse more Resty...and Displeases all sorts of Horses'. The alternative however is not, 'to Sit Weak...but to Sit Easie', that is, in relaxed confidence, in the understanding that, 'The Horse must know you are his Master' (1667: 207–208).

This hierarchical relationship is at the heart of Newcastle's method, born of his upbringing and genuine belief in the royalist model of love and respect for the divinely appointed ruler, and responsibility towards those below one's own status. Horsemanship both parallels and contributes to the philosophy for Newcastle. By understanding the potential for learning in the horse, man reinforces his own role, laid out by God, as having dominion over the animals. But he does so as a benign master, working with the essential nature of the creature and using force only as a last resort in the face of rebellion as it is 'so dangerous a thing to have a Jade' (1667: 308).²¹

This does not suggest an indulgent approach to the horse but rather one which sees that 'l'entendement le plus foible est toujours le plus passionné' so that the horseman degrades himself if he 'pique son cheval en le mâtinant'.²² Like God, the man can reserve punishment for those times when the horse tests his authority and then must 'avanturer d'entreprendre trop sur luy pour le reduire'. But also, extending God-like forgiveness, when the horse submits, 'il faut incontinent se descendre & le caresser'. He recognises that faced with a horse that is

¹⁹ Morgan Nicholas, *Perfection of Horsemanship* (London, Edward White: 1609) 63, 69.

²⁰ Nelson H. (transl.) *The Maneige Royal* (London: 1989) 43.

²¹ While it is still not unusual to describe a horse-herd as a hierarchy, this is an anthropomorphic concept for a far more complex and fluid natural interaction based on the horse's need for safety, ease and confidence.

²² 'the weakest understanding is always the most passionate'; 'spurs his horse rudely' (1743: 13).

very resistant, the rider must take time and 'reduisés-le au petit pas, mêlant le douceur avec les aides & châtiment (1658: 'Avant-Propos').²³ Here, as God trains his people to acceptance of his loving wisdom, so the rider trains the horse to accept him as a wise authority, not a violent aggressor.

Even the more primitive tradition followed by Blundeville advises the rider to, 'conceyve with yourself, that you and he have as it were but one body. And that you both have but one sence and one will'. Yet, this idea, shared by many horsemanship authors, could not feasibly be achieved by having 'some other man to take a sticke in his hand, and by beating the horse therewith on the rumpe, to force him to trot, or gallop'.²⁴ This suggests a lack of understanding of the equine psyche. As a herd animal and one programmed for flight, a horse could not learn to accept the rider as leader while being forced into action by a second handler with a stick. Rather the rider must 'boldlye, and without feare'²⁵ instil confidence in the horse and gain its co-operation.

Once the horse accepts that the rider will provide a relaxed but confident lead, his body language will reflect that of the rider. Therefore, a calm and focused rider results in a horse with similar qualities, which clearly reflects back the self-possession of the rider and thus becomes evidence of it. This lends itself well to the God/man, king/people parallel because it is natural rather than coerced and like God's people and the king's subjects, the horse is more reliable when managed with quiet confidence so that it has faith in its herd-leader, be that another horse, or a human.

In Newcastle's eyes, the horse was the appropriate vehicle for the demonstration of this relationship due to its natural intelligence. His acknowledgment of the horse as a creature having 'Imagination, Memory and Judgement' (1667: 219) means training is elevated to a subtle and artistic process, not simply one using force to overcome a powerful animal. However, as 'le fameux Philosophe Monsieur de Cartes' (1658: 'Avant-Propos'),²⁶ declares that animals do not think, he feels the need to counter this argument.

²³ 'venture a bold stroke to reduce him'; 'you must alight that moment and cherish him'; 'Reduce him by degrees, mixing gentleness with helps and corrections' (1743: 14).

²⁴ Blundeville, *The foure chieftest offices*, Book II, 4.

²⁵ Blundeville, *A Newe Booke*, sig. B.iii–iiiiv.

²⁶ 'the famous philosopher DES CARTES' (1743: 12).

While he allows that some horses are 'vicious' or try 'Jadish tricks', he also states that, 'the worst natured Jade in the world...is much easier Drest...than a Horse that has been Spoil'd by ill Riding' (1667: 311). He argues repeatedly that the reason and understanding of a horse is comparable to that of a man in that it can be seen to learn, to remember and to understand. He also points out that, 'Si on gardoit un home, dés sa naissance, dans un cachot jusques à l'âge de vint-ans, & qu'après on le mît dehors, on verroit qu'il auroit moins de raison que plusieurs bestes qu'on a dressées & élevées'.²⁷ This is a particularly important comment in the light of the great interest at the time in the cases of wild children, while the Wildman, as explained by Erica Fudge, 'figured in a number of ways – as ape, demon, savage. Irish native, New World native – to represent a border figure which made concrete the fear of descent into the animal'.²⁸

During the years of exile, through interaction with Descartes, Hobbes, Sir Kenelm Digby and Pierre Gassendi, among other intellectuals, Newcastle and his brother, Sir Charles Cavendish, maintained their cultural interests. For Newcastle to interpret the intellectual issues of the day through his experience in the riding house was entirely in character. Focusing on speech, the key point of conflict in arguing against the reason of animals because, according to Descartes, 'speech is the only certain sign that thought is hidden in the body',²⁹ Newcastle suggests that, 'ce qui est cause que les hommes parlent, & non les bestes, ne provident d'autre chose que de ce que les bestes n'ont pas cette gloire & cette vanité qu'ont les hommes'. He also points out that 'nous voions que la rareté des choses produit fort peu de langage en plusieurs Indiens' (1658: 'Avant-Propos'),³⁰ suggesting that he compares Descartes and Hobbes in his analysis of the horse's mind.³¹ Associating the need for speech with our acquisitive nature, he argues that:

²⁷ 'If a man was locked up from his birth in a dungeon till the age of twenty, and afterwards let out, we should see that he would be less rational than a great many beasts that are bred and disciplin'd' (1743: 13).

²⁸ Fudge J., *Perceiving Animals, Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (New York: 1999) 58.

²⁹ Clarke D. (ed.), *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings* (London: 2003) 174.

³⁰ 'the reason why men speak, and not the beasts, is owing to nothing else, but that the beasts have not so much vain-glory as men'; 'we see that the rarity of things among many Indians occasions their using language very little' (1743: 12).

³¹ Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan*, ed. K. Minogue (London: 1994) 408.

D'abondant, les bestes ne se divertissent point en bracelets, en bagues émaillées, ni en infinies bagatelles de cette espece, mais elles suivent simplement la nature, sans avoir si grand nombre de phantômes & de poupées en l'esprit que les hommes, dequoy ils ne se soucient pas (1658: 'Avant-Propos').³²

There is a strong irony here, as Newcastle's own life was very full of such trappings of human nature, with his horses, an expensive luxury, being among them, and his humour at man's expense does not preclude laughing at himself. However, the idea that 'reason' and language go together relates to the suggestion that the horse does not think at all, whereas Newcastle's experience teaches him otherwise, 'Let the Learned say what they Please' (1667: 219).

It is clear to him that all men do not perceive what to the horse-man is obvious and he recognises also, with his keen ability to cut through sophistry, that this is because 'tant ils ont peur de leur monarchie rationale' (1658: 13).³³ He echoes Hobbes' opinion that, 'this is incident to none but those that converse in questions incomprehensible, as the Scholemen'.³⁴ Through experience, not theory, Newcastle knows that a horse learns well by repetition and carefully increasing difficulty when guided by a confident hand, so that his methods based on routine and gradual progression are well-designed for the level of understanding of which the horse is capable.

The similarities between his advice on horses and that on the handling of courtiers in both the 1658 dedication and the book of private advice he wrote to the future Charles II suggest that he was also fully aware of the workings of human nature. His time as governor to the prince during Charles' boyhood was one that meant a great deal to Newcastle, both for the importance of the role and due to his genuine love for the boy and the man he became. The dedication of his 1658 manual and the 'little book',³⁵ which attempt to continue his

³² 'therefore the beasts do not amuse themselves with bracelets, enamel'd rings, and innumerable baubles of that kind, but follow nature simply, without having, like men, their heads crouded with a multitude of thoughts and business, of which horses are not solicitous' (1743: 12).

³³ 'so jealous are the schoolmen of their rational empire' (1743: 13).

³⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 44.

³⁵ MS Clarendon 109; references are from the transcript included in *A Catalogue of Letters [...] at Welbeck Abbey*, compiled by S.A. Strong (London: 1903) Appendix 1, 173–236, abbreviated to *Letters*.

mentoring role, naturally use horsemanship, the perfect model in Newcastle's eyes, as the starting point for his advice.

As a committed royalist in every way, Newcastle's assertion that 'Monarchy is the Gouvernante in Cheef off the whole Bodye Poletick, In all Itts partes, & Capaseties by one Person only' is in no way surprising. That this should filter into his treatment of horses, for whom the lead stallion in the wild or rider in captivity fulfils a similar role, explains one of the keys to his success with them. With horses, as with all subjects, 'familiaretye breedes Contemte', so the method Newcastle advises Charles to adopt with his militia, nobles and common people is the same as that he uses on his horses:

I Shoulde wishes your Majestie to Gouverne by both Love and feare mixte together as ocation serves – having the power which Is forse and never to use Itt butt uppon nesesitye.³⁶

With the horse he believes that, 'Love is not so sure a Hold, for there I Depend upon his Will; but when he Fears me, he depends upon Mine' (1667: 196). He echoes this in advising Charles against allowing undue familiarity, even amongst those closest to him, declaring 'iff theye doe nott mende putt them oute'.³⁷ This is particularly interesting in this context as a young horse being presumptuous towards the lead stallion risks being driven out of the herd to fend for itself. Without the favour of the king, social survival at the elevated level of the court would be equally difficult for the courtier. Newcastle clearly understood the nature of challenge implicit in over-familiarity towards the monarch, which, allowed to pass, could only suggest weakness. His rules for fair and effective government are along the same lines and his precedent for this approach is consistent throughout the advice book and the horsemanship texts.

The 'little book' declares, in words close to those found in both manuals:

thatt kinge that can nott punishe, & rewarde In juste time can nott Gouverne, for ther Is no more to Gouverne this worlde butt by Rewarde & punishmente, – & Itt muste bee don In the verve nick off time or Else Itt Is to no purpose,³⁸

³⁶ Ibid. 182, 201, 203.

³⁷ Ibid. 211.

³⁸ Ibid. 221; 1658: sig. f; 1667: p. 198.

The reference to 'the verye nick of time' is especially interesting when compared with Newcastle's advice, as discussed above, that as soon as the horse obeys, the rider should dismount and 'cherish him': with pleasing courtiers the king must, 'Cale them to you & cherishe them for they deserve itt'. However, this should not be seen as humanising the horse but rather an astute understanding equally applicable to horse and human: neither rider nor king can be 'well Setled In your Saddle', unless the relationship with the human or equine subject be clearly defined.³⁹

In the dedication to the 1658 manual, Newcastle lays out these parallels clearly:

Qui plus est, un Roy, etant bon Cavalier, scaura beaucoup mieux comme il faudra gouverner ses peuples, quand il faudra les recompenser, ou les chatier ; quand il faudra leur tenir la main serree, ou quand il faudra la relacher ; qu'aund il faudra les aider doucement, ou en quel temps il sera convenable de les eperonner. Il ne faut jamais les monter jusques a leur faire perde l'haleine, ou bien ils deviendront retifs, & rebelles, ou (comme l'on dit) ils prendront la bride aux dents, & s'emporteront; mais il faut plutost les traiter doucement, & ne prendre que la moitie de leurs forces, affin qu'ils puissent etre gaillards, & faire toutes choses de leur bon gre, & avec vigueur (1658: 'Au Roy').

This illustrates that Newcastle does not simply see the horse/courtier parallel as a metaphor but believes that the herd-nature of humans parallels that of horses to such an extent that the riding house becomes a suitable training ground for the future monarch.

The recognition of the right to leadership by virtue of strength and presence, which is natural to the horse, was no metaphor to Newcastle, but a parallel that reinforced all he believed in and his personal needs in life. A key strength of his work is that he offers treatment of the horse that runs true to his whole philosophy for a hierarchical society. While God, the monarch and the horsemaster need to inspire love and fear, by implication those emotions become desirable in the subject, human or equine. An unpublished poem, 'On the best of kings', in Newcastle's hand in the Portland Collection, declares, 'Wee all doe love thee, yett we feare they rodd,/Nott love for feare, butt feare for love, like Godd'. This suggests a need for God or the monarch which reflects

³⁹ *Letters*, 213, 211.

exactly the natural instinct of a horse for leadership in order to be at ease in relation not only to the herd but also to its personal space.

Therefore, that Newcastle himself took on that leadership role when riding his horses, placed him in the precise position to them that he desired for himself. His poem to Charles continues, 'Live for thy owne sake, live for ours, for thyne,/Oh live, for God's sake, universe, and myne'.⁴⁰ There is desperation in this impassioned plea for Charles's life that precisely parallels the fear a horse would experience when separated from the leader of the herd through which it gains its safety and comfort.

Newcastle's understanding of the mind of the horse seems to derive from recognition of shared instincts for safety and leadership, though it seems unlikely that he would have perceived this himself. But evidence of his behaviour towards his monarch, his family, his servants and his horses all suggests a consistent approach of respect within his understanding of hierarchy. He seems to have been fully aware of the quality known today as 'passive leadership', which is not in fact passive at all but denotes a relaxed confidence in the ability and right to lead, which inspires others to accept and follow. This method works extremely well with horses and humans but was perhaps compromised by Newcastle's desire for 'glorious slavery' in his relationship with the monarch. If Newcastle's belief that the horse '*puisse sçavoir, & par mesme moyen, penser à ce qu'il doit faire*' (1658: Avant-Propos)⁴¹ was neither metaphor nor a self-indulgent anthropomorphism, the question arises as to how he arrived at his view.

He was not the first to consider the horse's mind as active and intelligent but his close analysis of the way that mind works is a step forward in the development of the horsemanship manual. While de Pluvinel observes 'anger, despair and cowardice', all very human emotions, in his horses, and seeks to overcome them by 'coolness of mind',⁴² Newcastle's training is based on the belief that his Spanish horses are 'strangely wise' (1667: 49).⁴³ De Pluvinel knows that a frightened horse is dangerous and he aims to calm and reassure it by a gentle approach. Some horses in the plates accompanying his manuals are blinkered

⁴⁰ MS Portland, PwV25, fol. 1.

⁴¹ 'may know, and even think upon what he ought to do' (1743: 12).

⁴² Pluvinel, ix.

⁴³ Newcastle is not alone in his own time, or any other, in regarding Spanish horses and others breeds of desert ancestry as especially intelligent.

and the text explains that he sometimes rides them thus blindfolded because, 'horses learn better when they cannot see and are [...] less inclined to be distracted'.⁴⁴ Like the hood on a falcon, the blinkers would keep the horse quiet but suggest an unpredictable creature, not able to stand or work quietly without the denial of a sense. There are no blinkered horses in Newcastle's manuals and his advice on rendering them calm and tractable begins when they are weanlings. This ensures regular contact with human handlers without any pressure upon them, so that by the time they are old enough to begin training, 'they will Lead, and be as quiet as any Horse' (1667: 97). As a thinking creature, the young horse learns that man will not harm him, which eases the training process to avoid what de Pluvinel describes as 'the extravagancies of an unreasonable animal'.⁴⁵

As he moves on from the belief that the horse's natural fear of man can be beaten into a submissive state, so Newcastle progresses in understanding that the natural fear itself can be overcome by allowing the horse's mind time to assimilate what it is experiencing. When Newcastle describes the Barb as being 'of a good Disposition, excellent Apprehension, Judgement and Memory' (1667: 53) he knows through experience that a horse is not generally aggressive, learns quickly and can work with a degree of independence, retaining what it has learnt. He knows too that horses have will, motivation and character and understands how to work with these qualities, rather than seeing them as something to be broken.

To illustrate his methods of training, Newcastle frequently draws an analogy with the teaching of a school-boy because to him the parallels are self-evident. 'What Judgment,' he asks, 'can one give of a Little Boy, what Kind of Man he will Prove?' Similarly, attempting to judge a horse by 'Marks, Colours and Elements' is worthless. As a child's skills will be learnt as he grows, with a horse 'Ride him, and Try him... is the Best Philosophy to know him by' (1667: 104). Attempting to force learning by 'the diversity of Bitts' can be effective 'no more than a Book in a Boyes Hand, can at first, make him Read' (1667: 343). Thus, 'Horses learn nothing but by Custom, and Habit, with often Repetitions to Fortify their Memories' (1667: 218). He draws the analogy

⁴⁴ Ibid. 102.

⁴⁵ Pluvinel, ix.

to the learning boy repeatedly in both texts, primarily in relation to unrealistic demands on the young horse.

In the opening paragraph of the first manual, he says, 'Je voudrois bien demander à de tels stupides & lourdaus, si en battant un garçon, on l'apprendroit à lire sans luy montrer ses lettres auparavant?' (1658: 'Avant-Propos').⁴⁶ The likening of the horse to the boy illuminates Newcastle's perception of the horse's reasoning ability as being like that of a young mind, full of natural potential but requiring training.

While Plate 12 in the 1658 manual is titled 'Les poulins', that is, 'the foals', and it is also evident from the short tails that the horses in the engraving are youngsters, many are executing moves which appear to be those of the mature horse in advanced training. However, these young horses are demonstrating the natural propensity for agility the rider will educate into the art of the riding-house, and also that the airs are based on the natural behaviour of displaying stallions.⁴⁷ This point is made in de Pluvinel's manual also, when the young king is advised to watch the foals in his stud farms playing in the fields. Although Plate 12 is in many respects a fantasy – while the airs do relate to mating rituals, horses do not perform them with such stylised precision or *en masse* – the point that Newcastle will 'Perfect Nature by the Subtilty of Art' (1658/1667: title page) is neatly made. This aim of shaping what is natural is behind the analogy with the schoolboy and the necessity of patience and humanity in the learning process is apt because unnecessary force and violence are counter-productive.

Newcastle also uses analogies to illustrate that horses, like men, may have different roles and useful purposes that reinforce the hierarchy:

Lors qu'ils s'agit de faire une Republique, affin que les homes puissent vivre ensemble, ceux qui font des plumes à metre sur la teste de ces moqueurs-là, sont aussy utiles dans la Republique pour les maintenir & leurs familles, & servent autant aux autres hommes pour vivre les uns par l'aide des autres, comme sont ceux qui vendent le bœuf & le mouton; car tout tend à vivre, es uns par l'aide des autres, sans se faire tort ni offense.

⁴⁶ 'I would fain ask such stupid people, whether, by beating a boy, they could teach him to read, without first showing him his alphabet?' (1743: 11).

⁴⁷ This is well documented behaviour. See Rees, L., *The Horse's Mind* (London: 1984) 115.

As there are different types of men who may all contribute to society, so there are different types of horses with different styles and purposes in the riding of them:

Quant au cheval dressé, quilz appellant *danseur* & *badin*, s'ils avoient quelques duëls, ou s'ils alloient à la guerre, ils reconnoïtroient leur faute ; car ces chevaux là vont aussy bien à la soldade & à passades comme par haut, & les longues journées leur font bien tost perdre tous les airs qui ne sont proprement que pour le plaisir. Qui plus est, ils en sont beaucoup plus propres à galoper, trotter, tourner, ou autre chose de cette nature, qui est pour l'usage (1658: 'Avant-Propos').⁴⁸

He illustrates a practical situation in which men and horses play their part according to their talents and expands on this point further in his opening chapter. His lengthy exposition of talents which some possess and some do not, may be summed up in the sentence, 'Je voudrais bien sçavoir si tous ceux font profession des letters sont parfaits en toute sorte de sciences?' So, where horses are concerned:

... si le cheval est proper à aller à la soldade, mettés l'y: ou si son naturel le porte à aller à Courbettes, il faut l'y metre: tout de mesme à demi-air, Passades, terre à terre, Groupades, Balotades & Caprioles : s'il n'est propre à aucume de ces choses, mettés-le à courir la bague : s'il n'y est propre, mettés le à aller par la ville (1658: 6).

Not all men can be preachers, or musicians or artists and not all horses can be skilled in every possible use for them.⁴⁹

However, there is no suggestion that the service of the man who makes feathers to put in his master's hat is equal to that of his master,

⁴⁸ 'When a commonwealth is to be form'd, that men may live together in society, those who make feathers to put into their masters hats, are as useful in the republick, for the maintenance of themselves and families, and for the good of the community, as those who sell beef and mutton; for the tendency of the whole is to live by aiding one another, without wronging or offending any body'; 'As for a managed horse, which they call dancer and prancer; if those gentlemen were to fight a duel, or go to the wars, they would find their error; for these horses perform a journey, as well as they do high airs; and the long marches occasionally make them soon forget those airs, which are calculated merely for pleasure; moreover, they are much fitter for galloping, trotting, wheeling, or anything else which is necessary' (1743: 14).

⁴⁹ 'I'd fain know, whether all those, who makes learning their profession, be themselves perfect in every science'; 'If the horse is fit to go a Travelling pace, let him do it; if he is naturally inclined to make Curvets, he must be put to it; and so of the Demi-Airs, Passadoes, Terra-a-terre, Croupades, Balotades, and Capriols, If he be not fit for any of these, put him to run the ring: if he be not cut out for that, use him as a drudge to go of errands' (1743: 16-17).

merely that he is also useful in the smooth running of society. The feather-maker will be able to earn his keep, maintain his family and bring money into the community. Furthermore, the horse does not serve the state, the horse serves man and that man has responsibility for ensuring that his own and the horse's service is fitting for their skills (1658: 5). Therefore, the nature of the human/animal relationship is expressly illustrated further, as the resource of the horse's usefulness is in the hands of the man.

Newcastle's observations and years he spent training horses taught him that they learn much as a child does and his nature was not to despise that but to work with it as a resource. His approach suggests an observant, relaxed and liberal nature, as evidenced in other aspects of his life and in keeping with his upbringing when 'his father being a wise man, and seeing that his son had a good natural wit, and was of a very good disposition, suffered him to follow his own genius'.⁵⁰

It was perhaps as much his character as his philosophies that suited him for innovations in the understanding and training of horses. Studies of his life and interactions with other people support this view. Katie Whitaker says, 'he was in fact a hugely likeable man who took delight in pleasing other people – easy and affable in his manners, rarely standing on the ceremony his high social position allowed him'.⁵¹ Lucy Worsley's study of life at Welbeck Abbey under Newcastle reveal, 'a uniquely fluid and quarrelsome character at odds with those of more conventional households', wherein his second wife and daughters wrote with 'a freedom in behaviour and self-expression that was unusual for their century'.⁵² This ability to allow self-expression to those in his demesne may well reveal a great deal about his attitude to his horses and his desire to understand them as thinking creatures. For, regardless of an instinct to liberality, his belief that 'Familiarity breeds Contempt...and does no Good' indicates that any threat to his leadership would be swiftly quelled like the rebellious horse, which must 'Acknowledge me to be his Master, by Obeying me' (1667: 196–197).

⁵⁰ Cavendish, Margaret, *Life of the Duke of Newcastle, to which is added the True relation of my Birth, Breeding and Life*, ed. C.H. Firth (London: 1915) 193.

⁵¹ Whitaker, K., *Mad Madge: Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Royalist, Writer and Romantic* (London: 2003) 67.

⁵² "An Habitation not so Magnificent as Useful": Life at Welbeck Abbey in the 17th Century', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire*, 108 (2004) 123.

A serious challenge to his autocratic role would be unlikely and within the relaxed relationship evident between him and his second wife, she writes, 'I rather attentively listen to what he says, than impertinently speak'⁵³ and that she learned of a decision to move their household only when he had 'already given order for wagons to transport our goods'.⁵⁴ Similarly, when writing playfully to his children, he signs himself 'Your loving and in this your obediente father'.⁵⁵ His love was assured, his obedience however, was an indulgence. Within that context, his daughters especially relied upon him for leadership, as 'an intellectual liberator', who had encouraged their writing, 'giving them a control of words and thoughts that would enable them to be themselves'.⁵⁶

This encouragement of his daughters and second wife as writers, and his unconventional household in general, suggests that, while he may have felt insecure at court, within the extended family encompassed by his estates he felt at ease. Confident in his personal identity, he could write in an introductory verse to Margaret Cavendish's first publication, *Poems, & Fancies*, 'I saw your poems and then wish'd them mine',⁵⁷ and approach his horses so as that they will 'be Pleasant, lively... and take Pleasure in you, and in the Mannage', while aiming nevertheless that they should 'follow my Wayes and Obey me' (1667: 39, 42). His approach to his horses then became an aspect of his patriarchy, which extended to everything living under his command so that within his personal domain, as willing and obedient subjects, they received the benefits of his relaxed rule. Nick Rowe's description of him as a patron illustrates a similar idea so that 'his indulgent temperament appears to have offered encouragement, while opening up possibilities of expression and allowing some degree of licence, rather than narrowly dictating terms of approach'.⁵⁸ Keith Wrightson stresses, however, that in all aspects of paternalism of this sort, 'Such relationship stemmed from the existence of *permanent* inequalities and were based on the recognition of the power of one party and the dependence of the other. Moreover, they were conducted on terms largely, though not wholly,

⁵³ Cavendish, *Life*, 306.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 131.

⁵⁵ MS Portland, PwV25, fol. 21.

⁵⁶ Whitaker, *Mad Madge*, 86.

⁵⁷ Cavendish Margaret, *Poems, and Fancies* (London: J. Martin & J. Allestrye, 1653), sig. A1.

⁵⁸ Raylor T. (ed.), *Seventeenth Century – Special Issue: The Cavendish Circle*, 9.2, (1994) 94.

defined and determined by the relative superior'.⁵⁹ That this attitude should encompass every living creature in its perceived place reinforces it at every level, so that the ability of his horses to recognise his leadership became not only a measure of their own reasoning capacity but also evidence of their master's patriarchal power.

This is further reinforced by Margaret Cavendish's recollection, when referring to Newcastle's horses, that 'I have observed, and do verily believe, that some of them had a particular love for My Lord; for they seemed to rejoice whensoever he came into the stables, by their trampling action, and the noise they made'.⁶⁰ As highly sensitive prey animals, horses do not 'rejoice' at the approach of a handler they are afraid of, but only one in whom they have confidence of their own security.

The plates in the 1658 manual are rich with classical imagery and offer an insight into Newcastle's attitude towards his horses, which heightens and stylises many of the points he makes in the text. In the classical tradition, the horse is far beyond the unthinking machine suggested by Descartes, or the brute perceived by early humanists to be overcome by force. Artists were fully aware of the imposing picture made by a man, especially a king, on horseback and Newcastle asks his reader frequently, 'What can be more Comely or Pleasing, than to see Horses go in all several Ayres?' or, 'As for Pleasure and State, What Prince looks more Princely or more Enthroned than Upon a Beautiful Horse...?' (1667: 13). Far more effective surely, to be so gloriously mounted upon a creature of intelligence than an unreasoning brute.

The presentation of his horses in the plates becomes part of the overall philosophy Newcastle puts forward, reclaiming the classical imagery of the horse as a noble partner, reasoning and intelligent, but over whom man maintains the divine superiority. This takes on an additional significance because expressed at a time when he was detached from any significant political power, from his home and from all he had aspired to prior to the Civil War. He did not need to argue for the English aristocracy in his efforts to establish himself as a great horse-master to his Continental audience. He did need to assert himself as having a powerful and effective contribution to make to the shaping of the gentleman, despite his own personal dislocation.

⁵⁹ Wrightson K. *English Society 1580–1680* (London: 2003) 65.

⁶⁰ Cavendish, *Life* 101.

Newcastle's views on the horse's mind are consistently supported by reference to his practical experience and while he regards horsemanship as a 'science' in the sense that it is a skill requiring expertise and intellectual application, it is primarily an art on account of its aesthetic qualities. The 'reasonable creatures' quote (1667: sig. b2) may be easily misinterpreted as anthropomorphism but the use of human analogies is a way of facilitating understanding in the notional reader. The manuals were written for the riders of an audience of educated nobility, so that even where they relate to political ideals, they were aimed at readers, including Charles II, who would understand from their own practical experience and received ideas the points they contain. Both were written during the recovery of the nobility from long periods of disturbance and change. Therefore, the relationship Newcastle put forward as appropriate between man and horse was an affirmation of the social structures he retained faith in.

The engagement with the horse's mind, not as something beastly to be subdued but as a subject to be managed, offered the opportunity to transcend the violence of the battlefield, while still asserting the qualities of the refined soldier. Newcastle wrote from practice; his readers could apply that or reject it also from practice: clearly it is often easier and more appealing to latent human aggression to dominate a creature though force. As Keith Thomas says, 'it is impossible to disentangle what the people of the past thought about plants and animals from what they thought about themselves', which ultimately means that 'man's attitude towards the horse mirrored his attitude towards his fellow men'.⁶¹

Therefore, Newcastle's contribution to the discussion on animals in the early modern period was grounded in his personal experience of the horse as a creature that learns and remembers much as a human does. The way in which he used that experience was based on his royalist understanding of hierarchy and his generous personal nature. The horse and the riding house are not metaphors for life in Newcastle's manuals; they are parallels to it and illustrate the validity of all he believed in. For him, they could never be any greater affirmation of a nobleman's own status than, 'to see so Excellent a Creature, with so much Spirit, and Strength, to be so Obedient to his Rider, as if having no Will but His' (1667: 13).

⁶¹ Thomas K., *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (London: 1983) 16.

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THE MILITARY VALUE OF HORSES AND THE SOCIAL VALUE OF THE HORSE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Gavin Robinson

Horses played a major role in warfare until the mid-twentieth century. English and British armies from the middle ages to the First World War relied on mounted troops and horse-drawn transport. Despite many changes in tactics and technology, military demand for horses generally kept increasing in the long term and peaked in the First World War. Cultural historians and literary critics have suggested that perceptions and representations of the horse's military and social role changed during the early modern period. Bruce Boehrer has argued for a bourgeoisification of the horse in early modern England, based on his readings of Shakespeare plays.¹ Karen Raber and Treva Tucker's collection, *The Culture of the Horse*, was built around a narrative of the decline of medieval heavy cavalry which led the European nobility to redefine their identity in relation to horses. In this view, the *manège* replaced jousting and heavy cavalry service as a signifier of elite status in the sixteenth century.² Although horses continued to be militarily useful throughout the early modern period and beyond, the essays in *The Culture of the Horse* suggest that the myths surrounding them increasingly tended to deny their importance.

As Dan Todman insists, 'myth' does not have to be put in opposition to 'reality', where it becomes synonymous with 'lie'. Following Roland Barthes, he defines myths as beliefs which 'simplify, reducing the complex events of the past to an easily understood set of symbols'.³ These symbols exaggerate some aspects of the past while erasing others, and can come to be seen as the only truth. An alternative narrative of mounted warfare is possible and necessary. A major weakness of Raber and Tucker's volume is that it focused mostly on the

¹ Boehrer B.T., "Shakespeare and the social devaluation of the horse", in Raber K.L. – Tucker T.J. (eds.), *The Culture of the Horse* (New York: 2005) 91.

² Raber K.L. – Tucker T.J., "Introduction", in Raber – Tucker, *Culture of the Horse* 9, 24.

³ Todman D., *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: 2007) xiii.

early modern period without properly establishing what went before. While the authors looked at the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in detail, the middle ages were reduced to a simple set of symbols such as 'chivalry' and 'feudalism'. Chivalry, knights, men-at-arms, cavalry and the roles of horses in war are not quite the same thing but Boehrer did not always make it clear which was supposed to be in decline.⁴ In *The Culture of the Horse* changes in the cultural significance of the horse were often assumed to follow naturally from military and economic changes. A re-examination of the horse in war will show that the military effectiveness of cavalry, the social status of cavalymen and the cultural significance of the horse did not neatly coincide with each other.

Horses in War

Heavy cavalry were at their most dominant on the battlefield in the three centuries between 1000 and 1300, although even in this period winning a battle usually depended on a combination of infantry and cavalry.⁵ In the fourteenth century infantry became more important and were able to defeat cavalry in many battles, but this did not lead to cavalry becoming completely obsolete.⁶ Heavily armoured men-at-arms remained useful because they were all-rounders, who could fight on foot as well as on horseback. The most famous English victories in the Hundred Years War (Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt) were won by a combination of archers and men-at-arms. Of these battles, only Crécy (1346) conformed to the stereotype of French cavalry being defeated by English infantry.⁷ After this, the French began to copy English practice by dismounting most of their men-at-arms during battles, using only small numbers of cavalry for flank attacks.⁸ At Poitiers (1356) the Anglo-Gascon army initially fought dismounted but a group of mounted men-at-arms under the Captal de Buch attacked

⁴ Boehrer, "Social Devaluation" 91, 97–98.

⁵ Rogers C.J., "Tactics and the face of battle", in Tallett F. – Trim D.J.B. (eds.), *European Warfare 1350–1750* (Cambridge: 2010) 203.

⁶ Ibid. 204–205.

⁷ Prestwich M., "The Battle of Crécy", in Ayton A. – Preston P. (eds.), *The Battle of Crécy* (Woodbridge: 2005) 148, 153–154, 156.

⁸ Schnerb B., "Vassals, Allies and Mercenaries: The French Army before and after 1346", in Ayton – Preston, *Crécy* 271.

the French in the rear towards the end of the battle.⁹ The English had earlier won the battle of Auberoche (1345) with a surprise cavalry charge.¹⁰ The English did not fight mounted at the battle of Agincourt itself but did use cavalry for patrols and skirmishing earlier in the campaign.¹¹ This all suggests that for both sides tactics varied according to circumstances.

While the French continued to raise field armies consisting mostly of men-at-arms, English forces contained a very high proportion of archers. Only about 20 per cent of the men recruited for Henry V's army in 1415 were men-at-arms.¹² Despite their relatively small numbers in the English army, only a minority of them had any kind of noble title. Between 1282 and 1337 knights rarely made up more than a quarter of the men-at-arms and this proportion quickly fell further after 1369.¹³ In 1415 the Duke of Gloucester contracted to bring a retinue of 600 archers and 200 men-at-arms, including only six knights and 50 esquires.¹⁴ The Duke of Clarence's retinue of 960 included one earl, two knights banneret and 14 knights bachelor.¹⁵ Henry V paid untitled men-at-arms at a rate of 12d. per day, double the pay of a mounted archer but only half the pay of a knight.¹⁶ As Curry says, 'the days of feudal service had long gone', and 'all men were paid'.¹⁷ After 1327 feudal summonses were exceptionally rare.¹⁸

To be able to afford his own horse and armour, a man-at-arms would need the estate of a gentleman, but there were also opportunities for landless younger sons of gentry-families to work as professional men-at-arms in the retinues of lords.¹⁹ As the second son of a knight, Thomas de Mussenden inherited no land. He made up for his lack of inheritance by working as a professional soldier in the

⁹ Burne A.H., "The Battle of Poitiers", *English Historical Review* 53, 209 (1938) 44; 49–50; Prestwich M., *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience* (New Haven: 1999) 322, 329.

¹⁰ Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 327–328.

¹¹ Curry A., *Agincourt: A New History* (Stroud: 2005) 153, 155, 162.

¹² Ibid. 70–71.

¹³ Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 51–52.

¹⁴ Curry, *Agincourt* 63.

¹⁵ Ibid. 58.

¹⁶ Ibid. 56.

¹⁷ Ibid. 53, 61.

¹⁸ Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 74–75; Lewis N.B. – Palmer J.J.N., "The Feudal Summons of 1385", *English Historical Review* 100, 397 (1985) 730, 733.

¹⁹ Curry, *Agincourt* 64.

late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries, gaining lands and the title of esquire as a reward for his service.²⁰ Some men began their military careers as archers and later became men-at-arms or even knights.²¹ Lords sometimes provided equipment for their retainers.²² Horses signified social distinctions within Henry V's army in more complex ways than a simple division between infantry and cavalry. Most of the archers were required to bring a horse for transport even though they always fought on foot; men-at-arms brought at least two horses each and had to be trained and equipped for fighting on horseback, even though they mostly fought on foot in large battles.²³ The numbers, quality and roles of horses signified differences in social status, as did the weapons, training and titles of the men. The status of the titled nobility was further emphasized by their role in recruiting and leading retinues. Because of this, it was perhaps the lowest status men-at-arms who had the most to lose when demand for their services fell.

The Hundred Years War was not part of a gradual long-term decline of heavy cavalry. Tucker suggested that at the outbreak of the Hapsburg-Valois wars in 1494, 'the technological, tactical, and economic changes that eventually would render the medieval heavy cavalryman obsolete still were in their nascent stages'.²⁴ But in the late fifteenth century technology gave heavy cavalry a new advantage as developments in metallurgy created stronger plate armour which only firearms could penetrate.²⁵ Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that by 1494 the French heavy cavalry had regained the prominence which they had lost during the Hundred Years War. A side effect of this development was that the lance became less useful against heavy cavalry because even with the momentum of a horse behind it, the point could rarely penetrate the new armour.²⁶ Firearms created opportunities as well as problems for cavalry in the sixteenth century. Reiters, a new kind of cavalry armed primarily with pistols, were able to do significant

²⁰ Leathes R., "Thomas de Mussenden", *The Soldier in later Medieval England*, <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/March2008.php>.

²¹ Simpkin D., "Robert de Fishlake", *The Soldier in later Medieval England*, <http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/February2008.php>.

²² Curry, *Agincourt* 64.

²³ Ibid. 64, 66, 69–70.

²⁴ Tucker T.J., "Early Modern French Noble Identity and the Equestrian 'Airs above the Ground'", in Raber – Tucker *Culture of the Horse* 276–277.

²⁵ Rogers, "Tactics" 209–210.

²⁶ Ibid. 208, 226.

damage to pike-blocks by advancing and firing their pistols then retiring to reload (this manoeuvre is now commonly known as the 'caracole' but, as Clifford Rogers points out, the word was often used to mean other things in the early modern period).²⁷ Rogers calculates that a large block of pikes would have a vulnerable point in the centre where fire from the wings could not reach, allowing cavalry to ride in and fire their pistols with impunity.²⁸ Some theorists argued that reiters could hold their own against heavy lancers by mingling with them and using their pistols at very close range.²⁹ Meanwhile, large formations of pikes and muskets made the *dismounted* man-at-arms obsolete.

Cavalry remained important in the seventeenth century. By the time that civil war broke out in England in 1642, cavalry had mostly abandoned heavy armour and lances, relying on swords and pistols. Only a few units of cuirassiers, equipped with swords, pistols and plate armour, were raised. Most cavalry were described as arquebusiers. Their metal armour usually consisted solely of back and breast plates and helmets, with leather buffcoats to protect their arms. The main weapons they deployed comprised swords, pistols and sometimes carbines.³⁰ Although their name and equipment might suggest that arquebusiers primarily relied on firepower, the manoeuvre known as the caracole had largely fallen out of use before 1642. Higher proportions of muskets to pikes meant that the cavalry were increasingly likely to be outgunned, and smaller infantry battalions arranged in Dutch or Swedish style probably eliminated the gap in the centre.³¹ The tactics used in the English Civil War varied according to circumstances. In 1642 and 1643, parliamentary cavalry in the armies of the Earl of Essex and Sir William Waller often received charges at a standstill, firing their pistols and carbines as the enemy approached. This was a complete failure at Edgehill (1642), where Essex's cavalry wings ran away without much of a fight, but it worked two times out of three at first Newbury (1643).³² Goring used a similar tactic on the royalist left

²⁷ Ibid. 217–218, 226, 228–229.

²⁸ Ibid. 217–218.

²⁹ Rogers, "Tactics" 226; de La Noue F., *The politicke and militarie discourses of the Lord de La Nouue*, trans. E. Aggas (London, Thomas Orwin: 1588) 198–203.

³⁰ Edwards P., *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London: 2007) 175.

³¹ Rogers, "Tactics" 217–218.

³² Wanklyn M.D.G., *Decisive Battles of the English Civil War* (Barnsley: 2006) 46–48, 73–74; Day J., *Gloucester and Newbury 1643: The Turning Point of the Civil War* (Barnsley: 2007) 172–173.

wing at Marston Moor (1644), only counter-charging after volleys of musket shot had weakened Fairfax's cavalry.³³ The practice of standing and firing was not quite the same as the caracole as it was a defensive tactic, which relied on the enemy charging first, and did not allow for retiring and reloading. Essex's cavalry were also able to charge when circumstances required as, for example, when the reserves attacked the king's infantry at Edgehill.³⁴ Cavalry did not dominate the battlefield during the Civil Wars but were still indispensable. Victory usually depended on combined arms. Neither infantry nor cavalry could win alone.³⁵ An encounter between unsupported cavalry and unsupported infantry towards the end of the battle of Roundway Down produced a stalemate which was only broken by the appearance of reinforcements.³⁶ While large battles were relatively rare, cavalry were also needed for day-to-day operations such as scouting, raiding and screening armies on the march. Garrisons depended on cavalry to monitor and control the surrounding area.³⁷

Cavalry continued to be useful well into the twentieth century. During the First World War wheeled motor vehicles were unable to cope with the mud on the Western Front and tracked vehicles were much slower than horses.³⁸ As in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, new technology created opportunities as well as problems for cavalry. Machine guns and magazine rifles increased the firepower of cavalry, who were trained to fight as mounted infantry as well as cavalry, using fire and movement-tactics to suppress and outflank the enemy.³⁹ Although charges were quite rare in this period, they occasionally succeeded, partly because firepower forced infantry into looser formations which were more vulnerable to cavalry.⁴⁰

During the First World War cavalry formed a small and decreasing proportion of the British Army but at the same time the absolute

³³ Wanklyn, *Decisive Battles* 130–131.

³⁴ Wanklyn, *Decisive Battles* 50–52.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 202–203.

³⁶ Young P., "The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down, 13th July, 1643", *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 31 (1953) 131.

³⁷ Tibbutt H.G. (ed.), "The Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, Parliamentary Governor of Newport Pagnell", *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society* 42 (1963) *passim*.

³⁸ Singleton J., "Britain's military use of horses, 1914–1918", *Past and Present* 139 (1993) 190–191, 195; Kenyon D., "British Cavalry on the Western Front 1916–1918" (PhD, Cranfield: 2008) 33, 257, 295.

³⁹ Kenyon, "British Cavalry" 33, 109–110; Badsey S., *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880–1918* (Aldershot: 2008) 178, 198, 229–230, 249.

⁴⁰ Kenyon, "British Cavalry" 60, 109–110; Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform* 212.

number of cavalry was probably higher than ever before. During the medieval and early modern periods the size of armies and the proportion of cavalry fluctuated rather than fitting into a long-term trend. Edward I and Henry VIII both raised very large armies bulked up with cheap infantry; during the Hundred Years War the English used smaller professional armies with an increasing proportion of mounted archers; English field armies in the 1640s were relatively small and had a high proportion of cavalry.⁴¹ Henry VIII's biggest army, raised for the invasion of France in 1544, was intended to have 3,684 cavalry and 31,955 infantry recruited in England, in addition to an uncertain number of foreign mercenaries.⁴² In 1645 the New Model Army was planned to include 6,000 cavalry and 14,400 infantry and in practice problems with recruiting infantry led to an even higher proportion of cavalry.⁴³ In December 1914 the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) on the Western Front contained around 20,000 cavalry in five divisions.⁴⁴ Because of the massive expansion of infantry and artillery, the proportion of the BEF's manpower in the cavalry fell from seventeen per cent in October 1914 to one per cent in 1918.⁴⁵

Cavalry horses also came to be outnumbered by transport horses. The growing size of armies in the early modern and modern periods guaranteed that more transport would be required. The increasing ratio of muskets to pikes, the abandonment of the pike at the end of the seventeenth century and more rapid rates of fire led to greater consumption of ammunition by the infantry. The growth of the artillery train necessitated more horses to pull the pieces and their ammunition wagons. Requirements for horse transport expanded by two orders of magnitude from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, while the cavalry only rose by one. Henry VIII needed 282 carts and 1,974 draught horses for his invasion of France in 1544.⁴⁶ By the First World War railways and motor vehicles provided an increasing proportion of military transport but at the same time the escalating demands of warfare pushed up the overall demand for transport to unprecedented

⁴¹ Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 116–117; Fissel M.C., *English warfare, 1511–1642* (London: 2001) 4.

⁴² Fissel, *English Warfare* 14.

⁴³ Gentles I., *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645–1653* (Oxford: 1992) 10, 32–33.

⁴⁴ Kenyon, "British Cavalry" 27.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 9.

⁴⁶ Fissel, *English Warfare* 14.

levels. In August 1917 the BEF had 368,000 horses and 82,000 mules, two thirds of which were draught or pack animals.⁴⁷

Cavalry Horses and Social Status

Increased demand for horses was a particular problem when civil war broke out in England in 1642 because two rival factions had to raise armies from the same country, potentially doubling the demand compared with a foreign war. Despite this, English supplies of horses remained adequate throughout the wars and very few horses were imported. England had a strong horse breeding industry and a growing export trade before the Civil Wars.⁴⁸ A further problem was that in 1642 many people preferred not to get involved in the war, leaving the burden of raising armies to relatively small numbers of militants.⁴⁹ Neither side made any attempt to impose taxes until late 1642, relying mostly on voluntary contributions to create and supply the armies which fought the battle of Edgehill. In June 1642, forty-four peers and household officers subscribed money to pay for 2,015 cavalry for Charles I.⁵⁰ The nobility did not supply all of the king's horses. Joseph Hillary, a merchant from Leeds, was fined by Parliament because he had sent a horse and man to the muster at York in July 1642; Bryan Cooke, alderman of Doncaster, also admitted to sending a horse to the king during the First Civil War.⁵¹ Although peers played an important role in Parliament's military and political leadership, they did not have the resources to raise armies on their own.⁵² Only six peers subscribed horses to Parliament and they only brought in 73 horses between them.⁵³ The gentry were numerous and wealthy, owning many good

⁴⁷ Singleton, "Britain's military use of horses" 190.

⁴⁸ Edwards P., "The Supply of Horses to the Parliamentarian and Royalist Armies in the English Civil War", *Historical Research* 68, 159 (1995) 57.

⁴⁹ Morrill J.S., *Revolt in the Provinces: The People of England and the Tragedies of War, 1630–1648* (London: 1998) 178.

⁵⁰ Edwards P., *Dealing in Death: The Arms Trade and the British Civil Wars* (Stroud: 2000) 159.

⁵¹ *Calendar of the Committee for Compounding (CCC)* ii, 941–978 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=59699>.

⁵² Adamson J.S.A., *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I* (London: 2007) 32–33, 44–45.

⁵³ The National Archives of the UK (TNA): SP 28/131 part 3, fols. 2v, 7v, 116r, 128v.

quality horses suitable for cavalry but they were divided and a majority remained neutral. Even Blackwood, who wanted to classify counties as royalist or parliamentarian, had to admit that a majority of gentry families in the counties which he studied could only be classed as neutral or unknown because there was no evidence of them willingly doing anything for either side.⁵⁴ In this situation, middling tradesmen and yeomen played an important role in contributing cavalry horses for Parliament's army.

Parliament passed an ordinance inviting contributions of horses, arms, money and plate in mid-June 1642, starting a system which became known as the Propositions.⁵⁵ Although these contributions were supposed to translate the Protestation into action, they were more or less voluntary in practice. There were no official sanctions against non-contributors until October 1642, when Parliament ordered that they should be disarmed and imprisoned.⁵⁶ By the end of November this measure had been replaced by a tax on non-contributors.⁵⁷ The commissaries responsible for collecting and valuing horses kept detailed accounts, listing the names of the owners and descriptions and values of the horses.⁵⁸ By the end of September around 3,000 cavalry horses, many of them with arms and equipment, had been brought in for the Earl of Essex's army. In the autumn of 1642 contributions fell drastically and the threat of imprisonment, disarmament and taxation failed to reverse the decline. Records of contributions continued until June 1643, by which time the total number of cavalry horses brought in for Essex's army was nearly 3,800.⁵⁹ In October 1642 similar collections were started in order to raise a cavalry regiment for the London militia.⁶⁰ This regiment, under Colonel Edmund Harvey, went on to serve with Essex's army in 1643 and 1644.⁶¹ More than 450 horses were contributed for Harvey's regiment, most of them in October and

⁵⁴ Blackwood B.G., "Parties and Issues in the Civil War in Lancashire and East Anglia", in Richardson R.C. (ed.), *The English Civil War: Local Aspects* (Stroud: 1997) 265–267.

⁵⁵ *Journal of the House of Commons (CJ)* ii, 618; *Journal of the House of Lords (LJ)* v, 123.

⁵⁶ *CJ* ii, 808.

⁵⁷ *LJ* v, 462–463.

⁵⁸ TNA: SP 28/131 parts 3, 4 and 5.

⁵⁹ TNA: SP 28/131 part 3.

⁶⁰ TNA: SP 28/131 part 5.

⁶¹ Nagel L.C., "The Militia of London 1641–1649" (University of London PhD dissertation: 1982) 110.

November 1642. Combining the two lists gives a total of around 4,200 cavalry horses, with a total value of around £64,000, including arms and other equipment.

Fewer than two per cent of these horses were listed by peers and only around twenty-two per cent of the contributors were identified as gentlemen or Members of Parliament. Many more were brought in by people of lower social status than the gentry and aristocracy. Tradesmen listed twenty-nine per cent of the horses and yeomen eleven per cent. These people were not necessarily typical of their social groups, as only a minority contributed horses, even when contributions became compulsory. No more than 446 contributors of cavalry horses are described in the lists as yeomen but, according to tax records from 1593, there were 1,177 yeomen and husbandmen in Bedfordshire alone.⁶² Contributors were more likely to be puritan militants. For example, a group of contributors from Watford had submitted a petition to Parliament, promising to raise a cavalry troop and to make the Protestation good 'to the last drop of our blood', an unusually violent interpretation.⁶³ The lists are also geographically biased. London, Middlesex, Essex, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire accounted for more than half of the total number of cavalry horses.

The Propositions lists tie in with other evidence which suggests that many middling people, especially in London, owned expensive riding horses. According to John Stow, 'the auncient and wealthy men of the Citie come foorth on horsebacke to see the sport of the yong men' on Shrove Tuesday every year.⁶⁴ In 1483 the London livery companies provided 410 mounted men for the coronation of Richard III and in 1487 they sent 433 men to ride out to meet Henry VII. In 1604 the Saddlers' Company provided six mounted men with velvet coats and gold chains to escort King James.⁶⁵ In August 1644 a newsbook reported that when some infantry regiments of the London Trained Bands returned from service with Waller's army, 'hundreds of Citizens

⁶² Campbell M., *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts* (London: 1960) 358–359.

⁶³ *LJ* v, 173; The role of the Propositions in constructing puritan and parliamentary identities will be discussed in more detail in Robinson G., *Horses, People and Parliament in the English Civil War: Negotiating Property and Constructing Allegiance* (Aldershot: forthcoming, 2012).

⁶⁴ Stow J., *A Survey of London*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford: 1908) i, 92.

⁶⁵ Oliver K.M., *Hold Fast, Sit Sure: The History of the Worshipful Company of Saddlers of the City of London 1160–1960* (Chichester: 1995) 36–37, 82.

on horse backe went to bring them in'.⁶⁶ Henry Foster, a sergeant in another London Trained Band infantry regiment, implied that some members of the regiment took their own horses with them on the march to Gloucester in 1643. When the regiment was left without cavalry support and surrounded by royalist cavalry, '6 or 7 of our men who had horses, rod up to them, and came within lesse then musket shot, flourishing their swords, daring them'.⁶⁷ Others were wealthy enough to be able to afford good horses. According to his will, Thomas Harrison, a saddler from St Botolph's Aldgate, had loaned £300 to Parliament, was due £700 for a share in a merchant ship and left £140 for his funeral expenses and mourning.⁶⁸ He had listed a horse worth £10 on 26 May 1643.⁶⁹ George Willingham, a merchant and freeman of the Painter Stainers' Company, listed a horse and arms valued at £27 in July 1642.⁷⁰ In his will, written in 1651, he bequeathed £700 to each of his three sons and mentioned similar portions for his two daughters.⁷¹ Riding a horse was not even limited to wealthy master tradesmen. In the 1660s a master draper claimed that he lent a horse to his apprentice so that he could ride into the country at weekends.⁷²

Contributions of horses had symbolic as well as material value. For Parliament they emphasized the legitimacy of the cause and demonstrated support beyond Westminster. The contributors not only expressed their loyalty to Parliament but also showed their willingness and ability to act for what they saw as the public good. They also displayed their wealth and social status by being able to give away valuable horses and arms. Most of the contributors were men and their contributions demonstrated and reinforced their masculinity. Financial independence and acting for public rather than private interests

⁶⁶ Dillingham J., *The Parliament scout communicating his intelligence to the kingdom* (London: 1643) Thomason Tracts (TT) E.7[4].

⁶⁷ Foster H., *A true and exact relation of the marchings of the two regiments of the trained-bands of the city of London* [...] (London: 1643) TT E.69[15], sig. A3r.

⁶⁸ TNA: PROB 11/213 Will of Thomas Harrison, Sadler of London, proved 14 October 1650.

⁶⁹ TNA: SP 28/131 part 3, fol. 129.

⁷⁰ TNA: SP 28/131 part 3, fol. 19.

⁷¹ TNA: PROB 11/218 Will of George Willingham, Painter Stainer of Saint Swithin, City of London, proved 27 October 1651.

⁷² Pelling M., "Skirting the city? Disease, social change and divided households in the seventeenth century", in Griffiths P. – Jenner M.S.R. (eds.), *Londinopolis: essays in the social and cultural history of early modern London* (Manchester: 2000) 168.

were both important aspects of early modern English manhood.⁷³ As well as being economically and militarily valuable, horses were signifiers of social status in their own right, symbolizing the relationship between rulers and ruled, demonstrating control, discipline and domination.⁷⁴ As noted above, by the mid-seventeenth century these symbols were not exclusive to the elite. Therefore, in practice, the association between nobility and cavalry was undermined when tradesmen and yeomen were able to afford expensive riding horses and provide mounts for the cavalry. Middling men were probably using the symbolism of riding horses to set themselves apart from the common people but at the same time they were making the horse less useful to gentlemen and peers, who wanted to set themselves apart from yeomen, tradesmen and merchants. By the mid seventeenth century the middle sort's appropriation of the horse had spread outside London. Even rural yeomen could afford to supply horses and arms for cavalry, whereas in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries yeomen tended to serve as or provide mounted archers, whose horses were equivalent to seventeenth century dragoon horses.⁷⁵ The average values of cavalry horses and arms in the Propositions lists show that in rural areas there was still a distinction between gentlemen (£14 each) and yeomen (£10) but tradesmen outdid the gentry, listing horses and arms with an average value of £18 10s. In 1642 Essex's army bought dragoon horses for only £5 each.⁷⁶ According to Stow, London citizens even appropriated the elite sport of jousting:

The marching forth of Citizens sonnes, and other yong men on horsebacke, with disarmed Launces and Shieldes, there to practise feates of warre, man agaynst man hath long since been left of, but in their Citie, they haue vsed on horsebacke, to runne at a dead marke, called a Quinten.⁷⁷

⁷³ Shepard A., *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: 2006) 70, 186–187, 210; Fletcher A., *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500–1800* (New Haven: 1995) 204–205; Cust R., “The ‘public man’ in late Tudor and early Stuart England”, in Lake P. – Pincus S. (eds.), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester: 2007) 117–118; Hughes A., “Men, the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ in the English revolution”, in Lake – Pincus, *Politics of the Public Sphere* 192–193, 195, 197–198.

⁷⁴ Raber – Tucker, “Introduction” 2, 14, 18, 20, 22; Edwards, *Horse and Man* 27, 82.

⁷⁵ Ayton A., “The English Army at Crécy”, in Ayton – Preston, *Crécy* 221; Curry, *Agincourt* 64; Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 143.

⁷⁶ TNA: SP 28/1A, fol. 164.

⁷⁷ Stow, *Survey* i, 94.

Patrick Collinson cautions that we should not take Stow's *Survey* as 'a simple description of its subject' since the text is full of nostalgia for things which had already disappeared or perhaps never existed.⁷⁸ But the above quote shows that at least one middling Londoner wanted to believe that the City had a tradition of jousting. Despite this apparent enthusiasm for the tiltyard, Stow had little interest in heraldry.⁷⁹ Stow himself reputedly always went on foot because he could not afford a horse.⁸⁰

Even when the signifiers of status were within reach, claiming higher status could risk ridicule.⁸¹ A satirical poem described Alderman Thomas Atkins riding at the head of his London Trained Band infantry regiment at a muster in May 1642:

A portly squire, a war-like hardy wight,
And pity 'tis you cannot call him knight...
Before the worthies and the rest beside,
Who saw how he his courser did bestride,
Wielding his truncheon like a weaver's beam –
And yet beshit himself in every seam⁸²

The poem emphasizes that although Atkins has wealth, political power and military rank, he does not have the title or noble qualities of a knight, and cannot even control his own body. The courser and the baton signify the ideas of noble status and martial prowess but the anonymous author shows that the underlying reality does not match. At his trial, Archbishop Laud was accused of improperly using a symbol of noble status by having six horses for his coach.⁸³ In this case, puritan hostility to pomp was probably a factor. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Adam rejects 'the tedious pomp...Of horses led, and grooms

⁷⁸ Collinson P., "John Stow and nostalgic antiquarianism", in Merritt J. (ed.), *Imagining early modern London: perceptions and portrayals of the city from Stow to Strype, 1598–1720* (Cambridge: 2001) 29, 51.

⁷⁹ Harris O., "Stow and the Contemporary Antiquarian Network", in Gadd I. – Gillespie A. (eds.), *John Stow (1525–1605) and the Making of the English Past* (London: 2004) 32.

⁸⁰ Archer I., "John Stow, Citizen and Historian", in Gadd – Gillespie, *Stow* 15.

⁸¹ French H.R., "Social Status, Localism and the 'middle Sort of People' in England 1620–1750", *Past and Present* 166, 1 (2000) 98–99.

⁸² Nagel, "Militia of London" 62–63.

⁸³ Adamson, *Noble Revolt* 129.

besmeared with gold'.⁸⁴ Despite his wealth and status, George Willingham preferred to be 'decently buried without pompe and ringeing'.⁸⁵

The introduction of the *manège* in the sixteenth century provided a new way of signifying elite masculine status through an exclusive equestrian activity. There is no known evidence of middling men practising the *manège* but the semiotics of the airs above ground could still be useful to social climbers. A print of Oliver Cromwell, probably produced around 1651, shows him dressed in plate armour, astride a horse performing a *levade*.⁸⁶ Cromwell was a very minor gentleman who had temporarily slipped down to yeoman status in the 1630s and although he rose to become the most powerful man in Britain, he was never knighted.⁸⁷ Throughout the 1640s he was preoccupied with politics and war and had staked his fortune on victory.⁸⁸ It is unlikely that he would have had the spare time or money to learn *haute école* by 1651. The body and horse in the print do not even belong to Cromwell: the portrait originally showed the Earl of Stamford but his head was later replaced with Cromwell's!

The combination of heavy armour and the *levade* in equestrian portraits suggests that the image of the medieval knight and the newer symbolism of the *haute école* had been synthesized into a conventional signifier of nobility by the seventeenth century. In technical terms the three-quarter plate armour of a seventeenth century cuirassier was different from the full plate armour of a medieval man-at-arms but they appeared similar enough for one to connote the other. The paradox is that, while the nobility continued to value the symbolism of the equestrian portrait, it could sometimes be a simulacrum with little or no underlying reality. In Cromwell's case it was clearly at odds with his social origins. Advanced horsemanship was also increasingly divorced from the reality of war.⁸⁹ Cromwell was one of the most successful cavalry commanders in the Civil Wars despite his relatively humble background and lack of *manège* training. For the third Earl of Essex,

⁸⁴ Keeble N.H., "Puritanism and literature", in Coffey J. – Lim P.C.H. (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge: 2008) 315.

⁸⁵ TNA: PROB 11/218 Will of George Willingham.

⁸⁶ bpi 6343, British Printed Images to 1700, <http://www.bpi1700.org.uk>; The catalogue entry incorrectly describes the horse as rearing, a common mistake, see Raber – Tucker, "Introduction" 18.

⁸⁷ Morrill J.S., *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: 1993) 121.

⁸⁸ Little P., "Cromwell and Ireland before 1649", in Little P. (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives* (Basingstoke: 2009) 118–119.

⁸⁹ Lawrence D.R., *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England, 1603–1645* (Leiden: 2008) 273–276.

the semiotics of equestrian portraits were not enough to secure a noble masculine identity, even when backed up by his ancient lineage and proven skill at horsemanship and jousting.⁹⁰ The failure of Essex's marriages to Frances Howard and Elizabeth Paulet left him with a reputation as an impotent cuckold.⁹¹

Social Status of Cavalrymen

During the Civil Wars, non-elite men served in the cavalry as troopers and officers. The evidence for the social status of cavalrymen is very limited and is easy to misinterpret. The most well-known example comes from Oliver Cromwell:

At my first going out into this engagement, I saw their men were beaten at every hand; I did indeed, and desired him that he would make some additions to my Lord Essex's army of some new regiments; and I told him I would be serviceable to him in bringing such men in, as I thought had a spirit that would do something in the work. This is very true that I tell you, God knows I lie not. Your troops, said I, are most of them old decayed serving men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and said I, their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality: do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be enabled to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage, and resolution in them?⁹²

This quote is suspicious for several reasons. It comes from a speech made in 1657, around 15 years after the events it describes. Cromwell makes claims which directly contradict his other famous statement about social status and military effectiveness, in a letter written in 1643: 'I had rather have a plain russet-coated Captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call "a Gentleman" and is nothing else'.⁹³ Recent research has suggested that Cromwell sometimes misrepresented his political rivals, exaggerated his own importance and took credit for the successes of other

⁹⁰ Snow V.F., *Essex the Rebel: the Life of Robert Devereux, the Third Earl of Essex 1591–1646* (Lincoln, Ne.: 1970) 33, 35, 82, 487; Robartes J., *A declaration of the noble resolution of the Earle of Essex his Excellence* [...] (London: 1642) TT E.116[25].

⁹¹ Snow, *Essex* 42, 52–53, 67, 192–194, 343; Boehrer B.T., *Shakespeare Among the Animals: Nature and Society in the Drama of Early Modern England* (New York: 2002) 79–83.

⁹² Carlyle T. (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell's letters and speeches: with elucidations* (London: 1845) iii, 65–66.

⁹³ *Ibid.* i, 166.

commanders.⁹⁴ His 1657 speech fits this pattern since Essex's cavalry were not beaten at every hand. The reserves under Balfour and Stapleton turned the battle of Edgehill from a potential disaster to a draw by charging the king's infantry. Therefore, Cromwell's generalization should not be accepted uncritically.

Other sources suggest that at least some cavalry troopers in Essex's army were servants. The horse listed on the Propositions by George Willingham was ridden by his servant, David Avys.⁹⁵ Many other cavalry horses raised on the Propositions came with riders. Of these, only seven entries specified that the rider was the owner himself. William Underwood and Richard Grenville were army captains, who brought in horses for their own use, and Edward Baxter was a gentleman.⁹⁶ The remaining four were London tradesmen: George Browne, cook; John Maryott, merchant tailor; Edmond Ellis, leather seller; and Raphe Hooker, distiller.⁹⁷ Some of the horses were listed by women, who were not allowed to serve as soldiers openly, although it was possible for a woman to serve disguised as a man.⁹⁸ Most of the owners were wealthy men but they did not ride their own horses, which implies that serving as a trooper had a relatively low status, associated with young, dependent men. Similarly, the increasing use of lightweight professional jockeys in the eighteenth century led to expensive horses being ridden by men with much lower status than the owners.⁹⁹ Sometimes, royalist gentlemen delegated cavalry service to their sons rather than fighting in person. Nicholas Bestow of Lincolnshire was required to pay a composition fine of £400, which suggests a substantial estate, but his only offence was sending his son and a horse to the king's army.¹⁰⁰ Some rural yeomen served in person with their own horses. George

⁹⁴ Wanklyn M.D.G., "A General Much Maligned: The Earl of Manchester as Army Commander in the Second Newbury Campaign (July to November 1644)", *War In History* 14, 2 (2007) 133–156; Sadler S.L., "Lord of the Fens: Oliver Cromwell's Reputation and the First Civil War", in Little (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell: new perspectives* 64–89.

⁹⁵ TNA: SP 28/131 part 3 fol. 19; Wharton N., "Letters of a Subaltern in the Earl of Essex's Army", ed. H. Ellis, *Archaeologia* 35 (1853) 9, 11, 12, 16; TNA: PROB 11/218 Will of George Willingham.

⁹⁶ TNA: SP 28/131 part 3, fols. 3v, 6v, 47v.

⁹⁷ TNA: SP 28/131 part 3, fols. 5, 27r, 34r.

⁹⁸ Firth C. H., *Cromwell's Army* (London: 1962) 298; Dugaw D., *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650–1850* (Chicago: 1996) 45–46.

⁹⁹ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 96, 107, 109–110.

¹⁰⁰ CCC, ii, 1373–1423 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=59707>.

Lewis, who identified himself as a yeoman, claimed that he provided his own horse and arms when he served as a volunteer for Parliament under Edward Massey in Gloucestershire.¹⁰¹

Royalist cavalry troopers were not all gentlemen or their sons. Two former royalist troopers from Devon were poor enough to petition the quarter sessions for pensions after the Restoration.¹⁰² In his memoirs, Sir Richard Bulstrode wrote that in 1642 he served in the Earl of Northampton's troop, 'which consisted of One Hundred Gentlemen of Quality'. This troop was put into the Prince of Wales's regiment. After listing the peers and gentry who served as officers in this regiment, Bulstrode admits that 'all the Servants of the whole Regiment were put into one Troop'.¹⁰³ Sir Philip Warwick, in the king's lifeguard troop at Edgehill, wrote that 'when wee valued the estates of the whole troop, wee reckoned there was 100000 l. per ann. in that Body, stak'd that day in that engagement against men of very disproportionable quality'.¹⁰⁴ As the most prestigious unit in the army, this troop was not necessarily typical. Warwick's claim about the lower status of their opponents is not entirely true. The Earl of Essex's lifeguard consisted of 99 men, who were equipped as cuirassiers with plate armour and were usually described in administrative documents as gentlemen.¹⁰⁵ The captains of cavalry troops raised for Essex's army in 1642 were 'almost all armigerous'.¹⁰⁶ The situation was different in some regional armies. In the West Riding of Yorkshire few gentlemen other than the Fairfax family supported Parliament. Lacking both local gentry support and resources from London, the Fairfaxes found it difficult to raise cavalry. The officers of their army included an unusually large number of yeomen and tradesmen.¹⁰⁷ Newcastle's northern royalist army also included non-gentry officers, such as George Cocke, a merchant from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who was fined by Parliament for serving as a captain of horse.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ TNA: SP 24/60 part 3, Lewis v Badmington.

¹⁰² Stoye M., "'Memories of the Maimed': The Testimony of Charles I's Former Soldiers, 1660–1730", *History* 88, 290 (2003) 211.

¹⁰³ Bulstrode R., *Memoirs and reflections on the reign and government of King Charles Ist and king Charles IId* (London: 1721) 75–76.

¹⁰⁴ Young P., *Edgehill 1642: The Campaign and the Battle* (Kineton: 1998) 271.

¹⁰⁵ TNA: SP 28/120 unfol.; SP 28/2B part 3, fol. 522.

¹⁰⁶ Young P., *Naseby, 1645: The Campaign and the Battle* (London: 1985) 24.

¹⁰⁷ Hopper A.J., 'Black Tom': *Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution* (Manchester: 2007) 210.

¹⁰⁸ CCC, ii, 1161–1210 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=59704>.

Literature and Chivalry

The evidence of horse ownership and the social status of cavalry troopers tends to support Boehrer's argument that the horse was socially devalued in early modern England.¹⁰⁹ In Boehrer's readings, Shakespeare's plays represent the military aristocracy and their war horses as obsolete and irrelevant on the battlefield.¹¹⁰ Jennifer Flaherty's contribution to this volume shows that this is not the only possible reading of the history plays, arguing that characters are defined by their horses in positive as well as negative ways. Ian MacInnes stresses the importance of geohumoral identities in *Henry V*, showing the rashness of the French nobles as a conventional representation of the French humoral constitution. The colder, wetter English humours described by Shakespeare would perhaps be better suited to the reality of sixteenth century warfare, in which large, well-drilled formations were more important than individual skill and bravery. Although the likes of Essex, Leicester and Sidney continued to act out the fantasy of chivalry by challenging enemies to single combat, their reckless conduct failed to impress Queen Elizabeth and had little military value.¹¹¹ In any case, as MacInnes points out, humoral defects could be overcome by discipline. The French begin to realise too late that discipline is the key to victory, as the Constable says, 'Disorder, that hath spoiled us, friend us now!', and Orleans declares:

We are enough yet living in the field
To smother up the English in our throngs
If any order might be thought upon (4.5.16–21)¹¹²

But no order can be thought upon and the French lose. As Boehrer emphasises, *Henry V* features an 'association of horsemanship with history's losers'.¹¹³ This is true even if, as Flaherty believes, Shakespeare loved horses. Horses feature very prominently in scenes which ridicule the French and are much less prominent in scenes which praise the English. The humiliation of the hot-humoured French could easily be interpreted as an attack on the individualism and masculine aggres-

¹⁰⁹ Boehrer, "Social Devaluation" 91, 94.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 91, 93, 97–98, 106.

¹¹¹ Fissel, *English Warfare* 165–166.

¹¹² Shakespeare William, *King Henry V*, ed. T.W. Craik (Arden Shakespeare, London: 1995). All references are to this edition unless otherwise stated.

¹¹³ Boehrer, "Social Devaluation" 93.

sion associated with chivalry. Therefore, war horses and chivalry are likely to acquire negative connotations in the minds of readers, even if Shakespeare did not intend to attack them.

The importance of chivalry fluctuated during the middle ages and was still being contested in the early modern period. Tournaments were banned by Edward II but revived by Edward III, becoming particularly frequent in the early 1340s.¹¹⁴ According to Michael Prestwich, the concept, if not the language, of chivalry first appeared in England in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries but 'there was a fresh, and much greater, emphasis on chivalric ideas in the fourteenth century'.¹¹⁵ This reinvention of chivalry happened at a time when the English were reducing (but not completely eliminating) the role of cavalry in battles, knights were already a minority of men-at-arms and the feudal levy was defunct. Tournaments were still a useful preparation for war since they involved dismounted combat as well as jousting, and helped to create *esprit de corps*.¹¹⁶ But at the same time, jousting was perhaps becoming a substitute for war as much as preparation, expressing nostalgia for an age that had already gone. The decreasing use of horses in battles did not necessarily undermine other aspects of chivalry. Froissart's tale of the Black Prince winning his spurs at Crécy is probably apocryphal but it shows that chroniclers were easily able to glorify the deeds of knights who fought on foot.¹¹⁷ The story also shows that the symbolic value of spurs as a metonym for knighthood was becoming divorced from their practical use for controlling horses.

The Accession Day tilts demonstrated that for Elizabeth I and her courtiers the rituals of chivalry still had some relevance and were perfectly compatible with protestant English nationalism.¹¹⁸ The third Earl of Essex managed to be a skilled and enthusiastic jousting as well as a puritan rebel but more humble puritan writers tended to be hostile to the elitism and aggression of chivalry.¹¹⁹ Milton derided chivalric romances as 'long and tedious havoc'.¹²⁰ Even this was not entirely a new development. Some of the absurdities of chivalry had already

¹¹⁴ Ayton, "English Army" 228.

¹¹⁵ Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 220.

¹¹⁶ Ayton, "English Army" 228; Edwards, *Horse and Man* 119.

¹¹⁷ Prestwich, "Battle of Crécy" 149.

¹¹⁸ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 138–139.

¹¹⁹ Snow, *Essex* 33, 82.

¹²⁰ Keeble, "Puritanism and literature" 319.

been satirized in the fourteenth-century poem *The Vows of the Heron*.¹²¹ Chivalry played a role in the construction of royalist identities during and after the Civil Wars. Edward Walsingham's romantic narrative of John Smith rescuing the royal standard at Edgehill and being knighted by the king is reminiscent of Froissart, describing Smith as 'this Mirror of Chivalry'.¹²² Smith was 'probably the last knight-banneret created in England'.¹²³ Defeat turned active chivalric heroes into passive martyrs. Sir Thomas Fairfax's decision to execute Sir Charles Lucas by firing squad for breaking his parole might appear unchivalrous by modern definitions but was not too different from the medieval practice of killing hostages if terms were broken.¹²⁴

Shakespeare's treatment of the French in *Henry V* fits with puritan hostility to chivalry and with more general anti-French and anti-Catholic stereotypes, but it does not quite represent the horse as militarily obsolete. The play illustrates the discontinuity between the cultural myth of the obsolete warhorse and the practice of warfare which continued to rely on horses until more than three centuries later. The negative associations of cavalry with the defeated French are very obvious but a closer look reveals that the English army depends on horses too. When Chorus describes the English preparations for war, he mentions that 'They sell the pasture now to buy the horse' (2.0.5). This places war horses alongside armour in opposition to the effeminacy of 'silken dalliance'.¹²⁵ On the night before the battle, Chorus offers a series of oppositions between the English and French camps (4.0.5–10):

The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fixed sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch:
Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umber'd face;
Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs

This strongly implies that English and French steeds are threatening each other. On the morning of the battle the French descriptions of

¹²¹ Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 220, 234.

¹²² Young, *Edgehill* 284–285.

¹²³ Carlyle E.I., "Smith, Sir John (1616–1644)", Rev. S.L. Sadler, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: 2004).

¹²⁴ Braddick M., *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (London: 2008) 548; Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 239–40.

¹²⁵ Shakespeare W., *Henry V*, ed. G. Taylor (Oxford: 1998) 118.

the English army (quoted at length by MacInnes and Flaherty in this volume) mention horsemen who 'sit like fixed candlesticks', 'poor jades', and 'fasting horses' (4.2.44–5, 57). Unlike most other narratives of Agincourt, Shakespeare's version has cavalry on both sides, and no longbows. The crucial difference is that while the French talk about their horses too much, the English soldiers do not explicitly mention their own horses before or during the battle. The only hint comes when one of Henry's brothers reports that 'the king himself is rode to view their battle' (4.3.2). Even here the horse is only implied by the verb 'rode'. This line implicitly accepts the importance of horses for reconnaissance, which continued for centuries after men-at-arms had become obsolete. In *Henry V*, using horses is accepted as a necessity which goes without saying, but taking too much interest in them is suspect. As Boehrer puts it, 'the Dolphin and Orleans discuss horsemanship as if it were an end unto itself, and this fact exposes the degeneracy of their fondness for equitation'.¹²⁶ And as Flaherty makes clear, the Dauphin is not even talking about a warhorse. The Dauphin's unhealthy obsession with his horse could even be read as an attack on *haute école*, which, despite its symbolic significance, was sometimes represented as impractical and self-indulgent. In his 1585 horsemanship treatise, dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, Clifford justified his omission of the *courbette* by writing that 'my intent is not to teach anie of them which make their horses more fit to daunce on a carpet, then for anie other kinde of service, but onelie to teach those, whose noble mindes delights in armes, and to have their horses made for service and travaile, which is the thing whereunto God hath ordained that beast'.¹²⁷ To Clifford, *haute école* was not only useless but against the laws of God and nature!

In 1643 a pamphlet entitled *A Dialogue betwixt a horse of warre, and a mill-horse* portrayed noble cavalry as the enemy of ordinary people.¹²⁸ Its poem and woodcut use horses to represent roundhead and cavalier stereotypes. The warhorse is an unruly and amoral cavalier, whose main interests are rape and pillage. He is explicitly associated

¹²⁶ Boehrer, "Social Devaluation" 93.

¹²⁷ Clifford Christopher, *The schoole of horsmanship* (London, Thomas East: 1585) "To the reader" (np).

¹²⁸ Anonymous, *A Dialogue betwixt a horse of warre, and a mill-horse; wherein the content and safety of an humble and painfull life, is preferred above all the noyse, the tumults, and trophies of the warre* (London, Bernard Alsop: 1643) TT E.80[5].

with aristocracy when he says that 'on my back I beare Some Noble Earle or valiant Cavallier'. In contrast, the mill-horse is humble, hard-working and longs for peace. His role as a pack-horse is portrayed as civilian, erasing the military use of horses for transport. The mill-horse draws attention to the 'wronged Farmers' from whom the warhorse's fodder had been requisitioned. Even the typography signifies social differences: the mill-horse's lines are printed in black letter while the warhorse speaks in Roman type. The mill-horse's ostensibly moderate position is false neutrality, as the pamphlet can easily be read as pro-Parliament propaganda. He blames the cavaliers for the war and praises parliamentary soldiers in the first person:

Thou art expos'd to battle, but no thanks,
Thou hast at all when thou dost break the Ranks
Of our stout Muskietiers, whose bullets flye
In showres, as in the fight at Newbery,
And force thee to retreat with wounds, or lame,
Is this the glory of thy halting fame,
Whereof thou dost to bragge?

This is clearly a reference to the London Trained Band infantry regiments repulsing royalist cavalry charges at the first battle of Newbury in September 1643. The poem claims authenticity by echoing Henry Foster's eyewitness account of the same action, published in London on 2 October: 'we let flie at them, and made many of them and their horses tumble, making them flie with a vengeance'.¹²⁹ Both pamphlets, aimed primarily at a London audience, imply that the cavaliers are socially elite but militarily useless. Although neither text explicitly mentions it, this was the battle in which Viscount Falkland met his famous death, hit by musket fire as he advanced on horseback.¹³⁰ A pamphlet condemning Prince Rupert's burning of Birmingham in 1643 put the conventions of the equestrian portrait into a negative context: the woodcut showed the prince wearing plate armour and spurs, mounted on a stallion performing a *levade*, and firing his pistol towards the burning town.¹³¹

Further hostility to the war horse can be found in more recent periods. The 1968 film *Charge of the Light Brigade* associated cavalry with

¹²⁹ Foster, *True and exact relation* TT E.69[15] sig. B3r.

¹³⁰ Day, *Gloucester and Newbury* 177–178.

¹³¹ Stoye M., *Soldiers and Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War* (New Haven: 2005) cover illustration.

incompetence, futility and an out-of-touch social elite. Incompetent generals obsessed with cavalry are a standard part of British First World War mythology.¹³² One tank officer described the cavalry as 'medieval', despite the fact that the troopers were armed with rifles and machine guns as well as swords and lances.¹³³ The semiotics of the horse must have had a powerful effect on his perception. The war horse continued to signify social privilege from the sixteenth to the twentieth century but in increasingly negative terms.

Conclusion

Boehrer's hypothesis that the horse was socially devalued in early modern England is basically correct but needs to be refined. Chivalry had its critics in the fourteenth century but still had defenders in the seventeenth century. The image of the mounted, armoured knight continued to signify elite status and was combined with the symbolism of the *manège* rather than remaining opposed to it. The fortunes of men-at-arms fluctuated rather than gradually or suddenly declined. Because they could also fight on foot, the vulnerability of their horses to arrows did not fatally undermine their usefulness or status and they could still fight mounted in some circumstances. While knights were already a small minority of men-at-arms in the fifteenth century, the social status of cavalry troopers and officers was even lower by the mid seventeenth century. The end of men-at-arms was not the end of cavalry. Their weapons and tactics changed over the centuries as new technology created opportunities as well as problems. The proportion of cavalry in the army fell before and during the First World War but at the same time the absolute number of cavalry was very large. Meanwhile, infantry and artillery increased in proportion to cavalry and in absolute terms, leading to greater demand for draught horses. The British Army had more horses in the First World War than ever before but this made it harder to see horses as special. The role of draught and pack horses remained largely unchanged from the middle ages to the twentieth century. There were some important developments, such as the declining use of oxen and the introduction of the

¹³² Todman, *Great War* p. xii; Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform* 306–307.

¹³³ Kenyon, "British Cavalry" 154.

four-wheeled wagon, but horse transport did not change to the same extent as cavalry and does not easily fit into a narrative of gradual decline or progress.¹³⁴

There were many continuities between the medieval and early modern periods. A crucial difference was that landed wealth had become an end in itself for the seventeenth century gentry and yeomanry rather than a means to finance military enterprises. The trend was perhaps already beginning in the late medieval period. Knights made up a decreasing proportion of men-at-arms. As early as the thirteenth century men of sufficient means were being fined for failing to take up knighthood and in 1420 a commission found that thirty-seven Yorkshire gentlemen had made false excuses to avoid fighting.¹³⁵ Most of the knights of the shire who sat in the House of Commons in the late-fourteenth century had military experience, but a few did not and their numbers increased in the fifteenth century.¹³⁶ Changes in early modern warfare led to cavalry using horses which were smaller and cheaper than the medieval destrier. At the same time, middling tradesmen and yeomen were probably getting wealthier. Because of these trends, the upper middling sort were able to supply good saddle horses suitable for cavalry despite the demilitarization of society since the middle ages. Horses were not always easy for armies to get hold of during the Civil Wars, but they were more plentiful than weapons and ammunition, which had to be imported into England in large quantities in the early 1640s.¹³⁷

Expensive saddle horses still signified relatively privileged status in the seventeenth century but they were devalued because they were not exclusive to the elite. The *manège*, hunting, racing, equestrian portraits, importation of exotic horses and the creation of the thoroughbred can all be seen as attempts to reinforce boundaries between the elite and the rest of society by reclaiming the horse as an exclusive status symbol. These attempts could have unexpected consequences. Exclusion from hunting provoked violent protests, which threatened

¹³⁴ Edwards, *Horse and Man* 183–186, 195–197.

¹³⁵ Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare* 15–16, 55.

¹³⁶ King A., “What Werre Amounteth: The Military Experience of Knights of the Shire, 1369–1389”, *History* 95, 320 (2010) 419–420, 429.

¹³⁷ Edwards, *Dealing in Death* 175.

the social order rather than reinforcing it.¹³⁸ The *haute école* was met with indifference or hostility even within the elite. Horses and cavalry increasingly signified the idea of obsolescence even though they continued to be militarily useful. This myth deserves further investigation. It cannot simply be reduced to a side effect of social, economic or military changes because it seems to be independent of them. Neither can it be dismissed as wrong and therefore unimportant, because cultural myths can influence perceptions and actions. If warfare contributed to the social devaluation of the horse, it was because horses were employed in increasing numbers and in less elite roles as much as because cavalry were wrongly perceived as old-fashioned and elitist. But the importance of changes in warfare should not be overstated. The cultural significance of the horse needs to be studied on its own terms because culture cannot easily be reduced to anything else.

¹³⁸ Beaver D.C., "The great deer massacre: animals, honor, and communication in early modern England", *Journal of British Studies* 38 (1999) 187–216; Hopper A.J., "The Wortley Park Poachers and the Outbreak of the English Civil War", *Northern History* 44, 2 (2007) 94–114.

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FORGING IRON AND MASCULINITY: FARRIER TRADE IDENTITIES IN EARLY MODERN GERMANY

Amanda Eisemann

Modern works on the history of veterinary medicine prior to the founding of veterinary schools in the late eighteenth century frequently depict the early modern period in Germany as a time governed by the collected wisdom of stable-masters and prescriptive manuals by court-based equine tradesmen.¹ While this is true in part, it is by no means the whole story. Just as there were many medical practitioners of diverse backgrounds and specialities who treated humans at this time, there were numerous types of veterinary healthcare providers.² Even regarding horses, which had long been a primary source of power and prestige for local and great lords, veterinary knowledge was not just limited to elites. Nobles neither mandated the direction of veterinary trades nor monopolised the practice and production of veterinary knowledge in everyday society. In fact, a very different perspective about the production of veterinary knowledge emerges when farriers and large-smiths, the two main trade identities that specialised in veterinary medicine outside the courts, are included in the early modern veterinary community. By recognising the major role that smith guilds played in equine healthcare in the daily lives of farmers and urban dwellers, one not only revises the general history of veterinary medicine but also reveals that equine-focused smith guilds influenced the direction of veterinary trades and controlled the development of veterinary knowledge much more than either court farriers or noblemen did. Furthermore, the hippological trade identities that seem so clear in prescriptive court-based literature fall apart when examined alongside historical documentation of farrier guilds (for example, archival records, guild books and objects of material culture). Accepting the

¹ For an example of this trend in Europe and in Germany, see Karasszon D., *A Concise History of Veterinary History* (Budapest: 1988) and Herzer H., *Zur Geschichte des bremischen Veterinärwesens: 1650 bis 1975* (Bremen: 1981).

² See Lindemann M., *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 1999).

expertise of equine-focused guild-masters reveals that there was neither a consistent nor unified grouping of trade knowledge, abilities or skills that defined a large-smith, farrier or veterinary practitioner in early modern Germany.³ Instead, these smith guild-masters and court-based authors constructed diverging, yet coterminous, trade identities through anthropomorphising their equine veterinary skill-sets to justify self-beneficial socio-economic and gender hierarchies.

Despite the economic and social disparities among stable-masters, horse-doctors and farriers at court, these men ultimately shared many of the same prescriptive ideals about proper equine husbandry, trade practices and skill-sets and veterinary hierarchies. In contrast to those who practised veterinary healthcare in guilds, court-based authors envisioned the trade skills of farriers as entirely focused on hippological specialities and regarded master tradesmen as easily grouped into distinct social ranks. Just as early modern medical practice distinguished between the role and rank of surgeons compared with those of physicians, farriery and equine medicine were recognised as analogous yet separate trades. Prescriptive court works represented the rank and value of equine veterinary trades as something that should naturally follow the model set by human medical trades. In this way, human hierarchies and behaviours were used to justify the social and economic hierarchies that were being constructed in veterinary medicine.

Despite the rising social prominence of large-smiths and farriers in towns and in the countryside, smith guild-masters were not included in the prescriptive trade identities depicted by court-centred authors. As the means whereby equine-focused smiths, operating between the mid-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries, could hope to achieve this social success, they began a strategic restructuring of guild culture around the still-evolving equine-based skill-sets in which they had trained. As opposed to advertising trade abilities in bovine healthcare or gaining a wider range of veterinary knowledge to work as a general practitioner, many German large-smiths and farriers chose to focus specifically on equine medicine. Although oxen and cows vastly outnumbered horses in early modern society, the skill-sets most often added by smith guild members were equine-centred farriery and medicine. By placing new, masculine values on the cultural status accorded to

³ Smiths of precious metals were of a much higher social rank than iron-smiths and held separate guilds.

their equine-centric skill-sets, large-smiths and farriers leveraged trade knowledge about equine bodies into a source of cultural capital within the general public.⁴ While Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has examined how medieval knights were able to create masculine identities through their chivalric dependence on horses' bodies, the gendering of hippological skill-sets and identities was a new practice among equine tradesmen in early modern Germany, one that largely developed independently from elite equestrian traditions.⁵ As the only guild-based tradesmen trained in hippological skill-sets, equine-focused smiths sought to raise their social standing as master tradesmen both by controlling who could learn, access and practise equine medicine within the guild, and by increasing the economic value of the smith guild by aligning it with the needs of its wealthiest patrons, the urban middle and upper orders.

*Prescriptive Identities: Equine Veterinary Trades and Knowledge
as Court Privilege*

Motivations behind prescriptive veterinary literature in early modern Germany were diverse and numerous, yet all include some aspect of interaction with equine bodies to create and promote masculine social identities. Common to each was the assumption that their audience comprised adult males, who were either established members of society or who were in the process of gaining membership, such as young noblemen or journeymen farriers. Also common to each was the expectation that the prospective readers would be helped in their tasks primarily by experienced adult men, secondarily by inexperienced young men and never by women. Thus, these gendered beliefs helped to establish an economic hierarchy in which the possession and control of inanimate trade resources, that is, the workshop, iron-smithing tools and veterinary training, became firmly dominated by well-established master guildsmen. During the early modern period, the development

⁴ My use of "capital" is largely based on Pierre Bourdieu's work on social networks. Bourdieu P., "The Forms of Capital", in Richardson J.G. (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research in the Sociology of Education* (New York: 1986) 241–258. For recent scholarship on cultural capital within the field of human-animal studies, see Shukin N., *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (Minneapolis: 2009).

⁵ Cohen J.J., *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis: 2003).

and projection of hippology as a masculine world was explicitly meant to be gendered, to claim and to explore horses' bodies as territories for men and as places through which men were permitted to create personal and communal meanings, so long as these identities supported certain social assumptions about gender and class. Therefore, while the equine masculinities of authors and audiences conflicted with each other and even within themselves, they collectively supported restructuring trade legitimacy through deference to a masculine network of social and economic ideals and thereby limited women's access to and use of the growing body of equine knowledge.

The purpose of this first section is to suggest that there were multiple trajectories of prescriptive equine veterinary trades and skill-sets operating in the world of court hippological knowledge. In order to define the court ideal for equine veterinary tradesmen, I will analyse the perspectives of four authors, ranging from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth century: Mang Seuter, Johann Walther, Georg Simon Winter and Johann Conrad Weybold. While each author identified himself with a specific equine veterinary trade and its related set of trade-skills, this was not necessarily the equine trade or trade abilities that others associated with him nor the only equine veterinary trade which he practised. The personal perspectives and prescriptive advice of court-based authors were grounded in a shared belief in the natural affinity of court culture with equine veterinary trades. These trades and their perceived relationship to – and control over – the social identities of noblemen and tradesmen influenced how these men understood and experienced working with equine bodies. Undergoing multiple editions – meaning that they were read by a wide audience and that their prescriptive ideals held some value for those outside court culture – these authors serve as representatives of masculine and social trends seen in other hippological works of early modern Germany. Each author also offers interesting commentaries on the models drawn by traditional historiographical frameworks of early modern veterinary knowledge.

Marketing Court Culture: Equine Trade Imagery in Mang Seuter (1599) and Johann Walther (1652)

The images comprising the title page of Mang Seuter's *Hippiatria* [Fig. 1] reflect the pride of a tradesman in demonstrating his trade skills and abilities before a variety of audiences. These scenes were

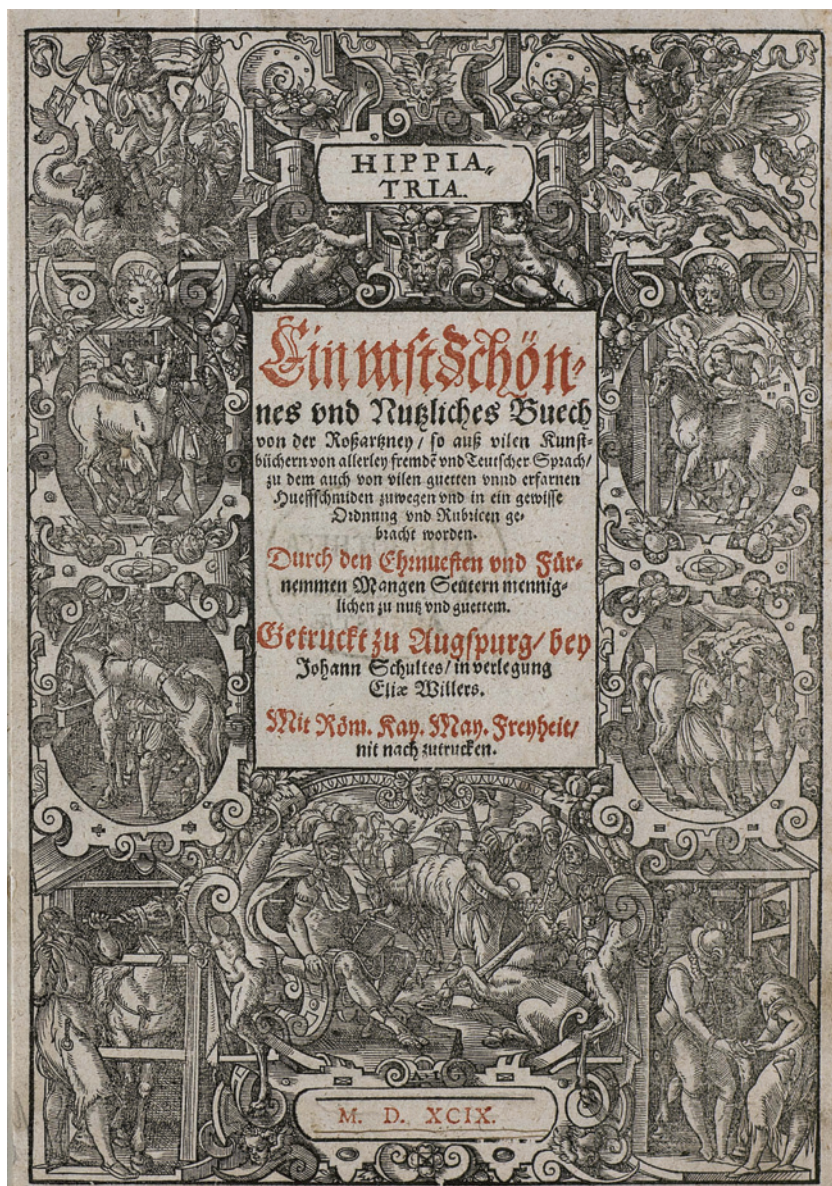


Fig. 1. Title page of Mang Seuter, *Hippiatria*
 (Augsburg, Johann Schultes: 1599).

supported by Seuter's text, in which he attributed his collection of equine remedies not only to previous literary works of court or noble origin but also to the dedicated efforts of many experienced smith-masters.⁶ Similar in structure and style to the other classically-influenced printings of this work, the title page of the 1599 edition contains specifically veterinary trade-related detail. As such, the illustrations provided *Hippiatria's* expected audience, primarily wealthy horse-owning men, with visual evidence of and an appreciation of the range of equine veterinary skill-sets necessary to maintain elite horses. For young or aspiring gentlemen, the title page was a quick and simple guide to the abilities and techniques that one would need to look for in a farrier and horse-doctor.

The central illustration demonstrates exactly which classical animal was deemed worthy of an entire book devoted to its well-being: not the donkey or camel, which are being led away, but the horse. This scene perfectly depicts the idealised political relationship between man and beast as well as between men. Reflecting a common humanist style of regal representation and thereby referencing Rudolf II, to whom the edition is dedicated, a Roman leader dispassionately oversees the farrier's ministrations. The farrier, identical in dress to the master tradesman, who demonstrates a range of veterinary skill-sets in the six scenes flanking the centre, dominates the horse. Standing over the prostrate body, he forces medicine into the horse's mouth. Presumably unaware that the treatment is meant to be beneficial, the horse resists the cure, but is restrained by a rope and by the male attendant, who forces the animal's muzzle upwards.

Seuter's title page makes several arguments about the role that equine knowledge played in the social hierarchies existing at court. Based on the sheer volume of abilities displayed by Seuter's surrogate, the trade of farriery appears to be quite nuanced, consisting of a large number of specifically equine-based trade skill-sets. Furthermore, by providing so many services, farriers are depicted as being vastly more valuable, and thus more deserving of an elevated social status, than other veterinary tradesmen at court. Additionally, the title page demonstrates an expectation that men belonging to the

⁶ For a discussion of the alleged date and origin of Seuter's first edition of *Hippiatria*, see Scholl L., *Die aus dem Tierreich stammenden Heilmittel im Roßarzneibuch des Mang Seuter (1583) und ihre Anwendung* (Munich: 1939).

upper orders of society were neither required nor expected to have more equine healthcare knowledge than farriers. In this way, Seuter's identification with the trades of horse-doctoring and horse-shoeing, along with his masterful control of elite horses' bodies, gave both his performed trades an elevated status within the existing economic and social hierarchies at court. The images show a man of lower economic standing in complete, skilful charge of a nobleman's horses as well as the men assisting him in such tasks as holding the horse's head. Interestingly, these men shown helping the smith range from either noble or burgher to a groom. The veterinary techniques that Seuter demonstrates reveal a proactive view of equine husbandry and medicine that favoured curative representations as an indication of the role and importance of horse-doctoring. Yet, it is also significant that several images illustrate preventative medicine. By exhibiting preventative knowledge alongside the curative, the court farrier is depicted as an experienced master of all equine veterinary knowledge and skill-sets. He therefore is a better master and tradesman than court large-smiths and horse-doctors, who possessed comparatively limited trade skill-sets.

As a potential counterpoint, the title page of Johann Walther's *Pferde- und Vieh-Zucht* portrays the economic value and social concerns of veterinary tradesmen from the perspective of a court horse-doctor. According to an edition from 1652 [Fig. 2], identifying what a horse-doctor does is quite easy: he is the man who purges horses' back-ends. Reading a bit more into the curious yet dangerous position of the master himself, this horse-doctor displays himself as a tradesman of iron nerve and strong dedication to treating his equine subject.⁷ Given that the primary theme of the book is livestock-breeding, the master's figure not only is meant to distinguish the horse-doctor as an equine tradesman of particular skills but it also underscores the importance of equine medicine to the success of any breeding project. The text and image of the title page taken together thus depict the man as a master of equine bodies and of a valuable trade, worthy of respect.

⁷ Not only descriptive but also quite accurate in terms of commonly performed veterinary skills, this positioning, with the man readying his tool, kneeling down behind the horse's rear legs, and staring directly into the anus of the horse, is unusual among visual representations of horse-doctors.



Fig. 2. Title page of Johann Walther, *Kurze Beschreibung Der Pferde- vnd Vieh-Zucht* (Erfurt: 1652).

Interestingly, the title page acts to reposition the noble-centric discourse on horse-breeding and equine medicine typical to works written by court tradesmen. Contrary to more traditional representations of court tradesmen that involve visually complex scenes with multiple male actors, the horse-doctor is literally depicted as the only person whose abilities elite horse-breeding projects rely upon for success. Compared with the celebratory depictions of social hierarchies and court culture in Seuter's image and in the title pages accompanying Georg Simon Winter's *Curiouser Stallmeister* (1678) and Johann Weybold's *Welt-berühmten [...] Ross-arzt* (1701), Walther's seems to take place somewhere else entirely. Without the added weight of the author's court credentials, a reader could almost believe that Walther was a common farrier, sharing his veterinary training with anyone who might need it. In terms of marketing this was presumably the point – that this cover might encourage a wider purchasing audience, who would identify better with a situation that felt true to their lives. Populist readings of Walther's title page actually question the honour of the noblemen overseeing stud farms and their habit of crediting themselves for the work performed by others. These politically dangerous interpretations would also have appealed to a wider audience through the physical experiences that a prospective buyer might have had with a horse. Urban lower and middle orders frequently applied equine veterinary treatments involving purging or utilising the anus as an orifice out of necessity. Furthermore, wealthy farmers, who ran their own equine-breeding projects and might benefit from using the book, probably preferred to envision themselves as the benevolent tradesman of Walther's title page rather than as Seuter's aloof Roman pontiff or Winter's haughty nobleman.⁸

In addition to the title page, it is clear throughout his work that Walther expected his audience to understand that he was far from indifferent to his trade as a horse-doctor and his elevated social status as a court tradesman. Not unexpectedly, given his long court tenure, Walther shared the nobles' love and admiration for elite horses, an attitude reflected in the text through his concern for the proper practices of equine healthcare. Despite entitling the work as a treatise on

⁸ This was particularly the case in northern Germany, where noblemen would have been associated with rising taxation and work duties, which were determined by local and ducal lords on the basis of horse ownership.

large-animal breeding, Walther barely addressed the needs and circumstances of livestock used by the lower-orders of society. He celebrates elite horses for being the noblest animals and regards them as the most valuable of four-footed creatures.⁹ Walther thereby aligns himself with both the *status quo* for prescriptive veterinary guides and the court culture of his long-time employers and current sponsors instead of presenting an argument for the economic or social interests of the middle and lower orders.

Georg Simon Winter, Curioser Stallmeister (1678)

The *Curioser Stallmeister* is one of the numerous hippological works written or edited by Georg Simon Winter. This particular veterinary guide is quite lengthy and has a number of full-page illustrations, which together would have placed it outside the income of most people. Nevertheless, it would have been useful to the few who could have afforded it or borrowed it from their employers at court. The *Curioser Stallmeister* is arranged in the systematic style of a modern veterinary manual, which supplies identification of disorders, their diagnostic signs, their causes, the techniques and tools to treat them and the ingredients and steps for preparing alleviative or curative medicines. The veterinary remedies primarily rely on common or cheap ingredients and on household tools, such as would be available to any non-specialist. Winter's own experience of working with horses, which was learned through his court positions as stable-master and breeding-master, clearly influenced his orientation to the subject-matter and to scientific knowledge. For example, he emphasized the importance of hygiene as a means of preventing illness and maintaining good health in horses, and he identified the lack of proper cleanliness as a direct cause of certain medical conditions.

As might be expected from Winter's status as stable-master, the *Curioser Stallmeister* presents that particular perspective on horse-doctoring, in which equine medicine is just one aspect of equine knowledge. His

⁹ Animal-books and moralising prints often celebrate other animals as the noblest or as the most valuable. Pia Cuneo has discussed the issue in terms of gender wherein female horses were used as negative examples in early modern prints moralising about sins of pride and beauty. Cuneo P., "Mad Mares, Willful Women: Ways of Knowing Nature—and Gender—in Early Modern Hippological Texts", in Lindemann M. (ed.), *Ways of Knowing: Ten Interdisciplinary Essays* (Leiden: 2004) 1–21.

approach shapes an ideal stable-master as the perfect house-father, a master so devoted to his equine trade and reputation that he is driven to maintain the highest calibre of horse. Unlike Seuter's farrier or Walther's horse-doctor, Winter imagined his stable-master as a master of hippology, who had studied the horse's entire body and life-cycle and was, therefore, more than a tradesman with equine veterinary training. However, this did not mean that Winter belittled the work of farriers and horse-doctors, or the extent of the knowledge and abilities that comprise veterinary skill-sets and trades. Winter realised the importance not only of diagnosing and creating medicinal treatments for ailments but also of employing surgical techniques such as bleeding, purging, cauterising and cutting. Since farriers relied on cutting as part of their routine preventative and corrective maintenance on horses' hooves, Winter recognised their distinct trade-knowledge in any discussion of hooves and cutting techniques. However, he did not regard farriers as experts on the equine body at large, whether physically, that is, apart from hooves and legs, or intellectually, in terms of anatomical, surgical or pharmacological knowledge. Yet curiously in listing the tools needed for horse-doctoring, Winter identified a smith-hammer, along with three other hoof-related instruments, each of which are marked with identifying tags and pictured together in a full-page illustration of medical tools. Also, the horse-doctoring treatments themselves rely on smith-based knowledge, notably through the use of tongs, hot iron and a smith's oven.¹⁰

Johann Conrad Weybold, Welt-berühmten [...] Rossarzt (1701)

Representing knowledge useful to riding schools, Weybold's book, *Welt-berühmten [...] Rossarzt*, aspired to offer horse-doctoring as essential equine knowledge for the noble rider. Although a stable-master like Winter, Weybold did not intend to provide a definitive veterinary collection nor a particularly scientific approach to equine bodies. Instead, Weybold actively supported a court-centred view of equine knowledge, husbandry and medicine, in which hippological knowledge produced or gained outside the court was considered suspect and

¹⁰ Winter Georg Simon, *Curioser Stallmeister oder vollständige Roß-Artzney-Kunst* (Halberstadt, self-published: 1691) 955.

crude.¹¹ In this way, he focused on a rank-based understanding of his professional identity and position as a stable-master rather than a trade-based one, such as that presented by Winter. His preference for horse-doctors over farriers and large-smiths acted, therefore, as a public declaration, identifying him to nobles and equine tradesmen as an active participant in court culture and as a supporter of a rigid, class-based hierarchy in communal equine knowledge.¹²

Weybold exhibited a contempt for smiths with equine veterinary training that was grounded in socio-economic prejudice. He sought to correct the public misconception that smith-based veterinary tradesmen, particularly those gaining their experience through smithing guilds, had any type of knowledge or skill in equine medicine. In this way, Weybold judged the quality and type of work performed by veterinary practitioners on the basis of their social and economic rankings both inside and outside court settings. By virtue of smiths' mastership being granted communally through a guild or structurally through additional iron-shaping skill-sets, Weybold presumed that not only did all smiths lack either good or complete knowledge of horses but also that the best equine healthcare could only be obtained at court. Additionally, through his praise of horse-doctors, based on their supposed expertise with expensive horses, Winter also indicated his disdain for the healthcare needs of average horses and lower order men, both by abandoning low-quality horses to the supposedly less-skilled guild smiths and by disregarding the possibility that lower orders, notably farmers, possessed a valuable perspective on equine medicine and bodies.

With this perspective of stable-master duties, Weybold emphasised delegation and overseeing of tasks such as horse-doctoring. Like Winter, he felt that one must come honourably by one's equine knowledge through personal experience. Claiming that he had personally tried and could therefore attest to the recipes, he presented himself as an equine veterinary authority and expert on the entire equine body.¹³ The illustrations throughout the *Welt-berühmten* [...] *Rossarzt* also furthered the idea that a noble rider must actively participate in the training and

¹¹ Weybold Johann Conrad, *In des Welt-berühmten Hefftrigs Reit-Schule Kunst-geübter Bereiter und durch Erfahrungheit gelehrter Roß-Arzt* (Nürnberg, Johann Jonathan Felssecker: 1701) 52.

¹² Weybold, *Welt-berühmten* [...] *Rossarzt* 51.

¹³ Weybold, *Welt-berühmten* [...] *Rossarzt* 52.

medicinal treatment of horses. While the labour involved was mostly mental on his part, an ideal equine nobleman was not afraid to work with his hands; the direct responsibility for the horse and the nobleman's social reputation was ultimately his own.

Throughout the genres of published hippological literature, there is a constant, dominant emphasis by men involved in the industries of horse-breeding and equine husbandry, a focus on creating trade and social identities through the combination of differing concepts about human masculinity and the nature of male cultural values within human-equine relationships and biologically grounded hierarchies. For these early modern authors and their male audiences, there was no one common equine or equestrian masculinity. Instead, each man exhibited plural masculine interpretations of self within the artificially reinforced homosocial community of equine knowledge and work experience. Both explicitly and implicitly, the cultural codex of early modern hippological literature did not acknowledge possibilities for women's involvement. In the literary genres of hippology, equine medicine was actively constructed wherein women's veterinary experience and knowledge were not valid and thus did not exist. In practice, few women would have had the resources or the social support of their peers to become court horse-doctor, in which capacity they would have had the authority to command men.

Horses, Smith Guilds, and Urban Masculinities: Veterinary Trade Identities in Collective Daily Life

Originating during the reconstruction after the 30 Years War, the increasing use of horses in extant social networks and economic occupations, along with the growth of new trades that relied heavily on equine labour, provided equine-focused trade communities with a new forum for negotiating social capital.¹⁴ This was new cultural terrain without, at the time, universal or uniform trade practices and values. It is, therefore, highly significant that of all the urban equine-focused communities, the smith guild alone chose horses as the primary means through which its members came to view and represent themselves as

¹⁴ These new industries included land-surveying, postal service and carriage building.

valuable members of early modern society. Large-smiths and farriers concerned with equine healthcare were unique among equine-related artisans for their reliance on horse bodies, whether direct or indirect, as symbols to represent themselves and their guild.¹⁵ Yet, the new values generated, shared and reshaped by smith trade identities did not all follow the same path. Instead, they developed as co-narratives of early modern guild culture and masculinity. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these smiths increasingly used guild privileges concerning the regulation of equine farriery and medicine as a means of adapting to economic changes in local markets.¹⁶ In this way, they created and expanded their trade identities through shared, yet localised, codes of masculine honour that were grounded in their mastery of equine bodies. Large-smiths and farriers simultaneously restructured guild boundaries to favour certain groups of men through informal guild practices, rewarding these members with both horse-shoeing and horse-medicine skill-sets.

Given the major role that economic occupations played in defining men's rank and position in a predominantly patriarchal society, analysing early modern male trade identities offers great potential as a method of discovering how early modern masculine identities were constructed and performed.¹⁷ This section will examine how smith guild masters in Braunschweig-Lüneburg understood their relationships with other humans through their own control of hippological capital. The close association between masters' social and economic identities and equine skill-sets grew out of a cultural reinterpretation of the role that horses and trade played in men's daily lives. By analysing situations, in which horses were central to the construction of guild identities, I will be exploring how smiths' mutually constructed beliefs about human gender and equine trade abilities influenced not only

¹⁵ Equine-focused trade positions included bridle-maker, saddler, and spur-maker.

¹⁶ For more information about the construction of cultural values at livestock markets, see Fenske M., *Marktkultur in der Frühen Neuzeit: Wirtschaft, Macht und Unterhaltung auf einem städtischen Jahr- und Viehmarkt* (Cologne: 2006).

¹⁷ On the influence of patriarchy in the development of early modern masculinities, see Dinges M., *Hausväter, Priester, Kastraten. Zur Konstruktion von Männlichkeit in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Göttingen: 1998) and Hendrix S., "Masculinity and Patriarchy in Reformation Germany", in Hendrix S. – Karant-Nunn K. (eds.), *Masculinity in the Reformation Era* (Kirkville, MO: 2008) 71–91. For a discussion of the connection between men's trade and social hierarchies, see Stuart K., *Defiled Trades and Social Outcasts: Honor and Ritual Pollution in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: 1999).

the development of court veterinary medicine but also the practice of veterinary medicine in early modern society.

Smith Guilds and the Culture of Veterinary Trades

In early modern prescriptive literature, court farriers and horse-doctors are exclusively described as independent tradesmen, who had the legal privilege both to work at court and to operate a workshop outside a guild's restraints and tax burdens. While certainly an accurate account of the situation at court, this representation reflects the reality for only a tiny minority of veterinary practitioners at the time.¹⁸ Moreover, not only had the bulk of court equine tradesmen begun their training through the guild system but also many returned to guilds when they were no longer supported by the court.¹⁹ Outside the court, most equine medicine was performed and overseen by smith guild-masters, who relied on a hierarchical operating system as a central part of their business practices and trade identity. The strict enforcement of this type of economic accountability and social ranking was a requirement stipulated in the articles granting guilds local trade monopolies. In both urban areas and court towns, these guilds consisted of a network of workshops run by guild-certified masters or, occasionally, their widows, who were usually assisted by one journeymen and one or two apprentices. One of the major benefits of working at court was being permitted at least two journeymen, which meant that a smith potentially could produce and sell much more than when limited by guild guidelines. As this suggests, for masters within smithing guilds the number of journeymen held by one privileged guild-master was a source of contention for others, who were concerned with potential

¹⁸ Furthermore, horse-doctors were not hired directly by the lord of the court but were technically hired and supervised under the jurisdiction of the court Marshall.

¹⁹ One example of this was Carl Andreas Hoyer, a farrier in Celle. When the ducal court required less of his services, Hoyer could hold on to his privileges but be unable to exercise them due to the lack of work, while contractually obligated to take on no other job. On the other hand, he could join the local guild, which entailed taking on fewer journeymen and more tax burdens, and actually find work to support himself and his family. See Hauptstaatsarchiv Hannover (HStA), Hann. 107b, nr. 165, 1740–1.

inequalities in social reputation and income arising from the extra labour.²⁰

While there was a general trend over the early modern period for men of all backgrounds – and for various purposes – to push women out of guilds and trades, the large-smiths and farriers of Braunschweig-Lüneburg present an interesting case for the study of early modern masculinity.²¹ Like other guilds, an idealised male-gendered work culture developed out of the smith guild but it was practised more readily and with greater force by smiths whose trade identities were connected directly with equine skill-sets.²² A master large-smith or farrier's legitimacy was grounded in myriad public trade performances as a result of constantly working under the oversight of his or her human client, making house-calls and vending services at regional livestock markets. This type of active public behaviour increasingly became less socially acceptable for women to perform both inside and outside the guild.²³ The cultural exclusion of women from social and trade hierarchies was part of the mechanism that led to a masculinisation of equine-centric smithing and medicine. And the more control women lost within the guild over the late seventeenth century, the more the remaining guild-masters sought to recognise equine medicine as a male-only commodity. In a consistently uncertain market, these male guild-masters benefited heavily from restricting the pool of potential competitors, whether they were women, who had fewer legal rights than men and thus more easily shut out of trades, or 'undesirable' men. However, the guild rights of female smiths with equine skill-sets had never been equal to men. Guild-widows, who were allowed to practise the trade itself, retained

²⁰ In Braunschweig-Lüneburg, it was uncommon for a guild-master to have more than one journeyman. Conversely, it was common for masters to concurrently have several apprentices.

²¹ For an excellent discussion about women's involvement in trade guilds, see Crowston C., "Women, Gender and Guilds in Early Modern Europe: An Overview of Recent Research", in Lucanssen J. *et al.* (eds.), *The Return of the Guilds* (New York: 2008).

²² For recent scholarship on the diverse practices and cultures of early modern guilds, see Prak M. *et al.*, *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation* (Burlington, VT: 2006).

²³ On the de legitimisation of women's public economic activities in early modern Germany, see Gray M., *Productive Men, Reproductive Women: the Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres during the German Enlightenment* (New York: 2000).

the vending rights of the deceased spouse but were not recognised publicly as contributing towards communal smithing or veterinary knowledge. Nor were women publicly recognised on an individual level for their possession of skills in equine healthcare.²⁴ At no point in this region during the early modern period were female large-smiths granted full status of master, even though smith guilds in the region did at times permit women to learn basic iron-smithing skill-sets such as making nails.

Communal Practice of Equine Trade Identities

It is through the promotion of equine trade identities (large-smith and hoof-smith) and then equine veterinary skill-sets (hoof-smith and horse-doctor) as part of their communal social identity that smith guilds increased their economic influence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet conversely, the increased significance of equine knowledge and trade abilities as part of the communal culture of the entire smith guild also led to a splintering of ranks between large- and small-smiths as well as between large-smiths and farriers. The economic development of these urban smith guilds was disparate and case-specific, as the guilds were responding to a number of local legal challenges at the same time as they were seeking to increase the social recognition and cultural value of their guild. However, the constant among these divergent scenarios lay in the value increasingly placed on equine-related trade by large-smiths and farriers over the course of late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Consistent among all the cases was these smiths' emphasis, whether as a whole or as representatives of an equine medicine skill-set, on the new locus of the smithing trade. Thus, the smith guild's right to exist came to be rooted in the relationship of a large-smith or farrier's ability with horses rather than with cattle or human agricultural needs.²⁵

²⁴ For an example in Celle, internal guild documents do not list women as owing or paying guild fines for any reason. Furthermore, while some men are recorded as having bought their wives into the guild, their wives' names are not mentioned.

²⁵ For an examination of the significance of horses as the primary force moving early modern economies, see Heike Schmidt's dissertation, *Die Bedeutung des Pferdes und der Pferdezucht vom 17. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert im Kurfürstentum Hannover* (Hannover: 1997).

While disputes about iron did arouse concern and legalistic ire in early modern smiths with general or equine trade identities, unprocessed iron by itself did not exercise much cultural force for large-smiths. For whatever reason, iron was not a compelling or useful symbol for large-smiths until it was either formed into a shape for direct use in equine-based industries or designated for use on horses' bodies. Guild large-smiths, along with other smiths trained in veterinary skill-sets, shared the belief that by emphasising their trade skills as smiths, who could craft, modify and vend iron products for horses, they could exercise a new type of cultural capital.²⁶ By associating themselves with horses, these men sought to improve the social and economic status of guild smiths. However, in so doing these gendered beliefs about the transfer of trade skill-sets and resources began to influence and direct the daily practice of large-smithing and farriery.

The majority of guild masters with equine trade identities in larger towns eventually left smith guilds in order to create equestrian-focused guilds, such as the one formed by Braunschweig's large-smiths and farriers in conjunction with weapon-smiths. Alternatively, they might establish separate, equine-focused franchises, such as Hanover's large-smith guild, which was established in the new industrial district by master farriers from the still-extant, old-city smith guild. Yet, for some large-smiths, such as those in smaller or court towns like Celle, keeping the future economic viability of their bargaining unit intact was the most pressing issue. Concerned more with retaining a dependable income, these guild-masters attempted a compromise by staying within the same guild but re-figuring the large-smith division into a farrier division.²⁷ Meanwhile, urban large-smiths, who had stayed in general-focused smith guilds, acquired the reputation for attempting to dominate and control guild activities. Along with pursuing legal cases that most benefited equine-focused smiths, they also strove to reduce the rights and voice of the small-smith guild masters, even going so far as to refuse to allow small-smiths the right to see or use the main guild records and master-books.²⁸ In cities like Braunschweig, this seizure of power resulted from rivalry between the guild's two branches. There,

²⁶ For scholarship on German guilds' use of social capital, see Ogilvie S., "Guilds, Efficiency, and Social Capital: Evidence from German Proto-Industry", *The Economic History Review* 57, 2 (2004) 286–333.

²⁷ By at least 1714 Celle's large-smiths were subsumed by the hoof-smith division.

²⁸ Staatsarchiv Wolfenbüttel (StA), 4 Alt 5, nr. 247, 9. April 1705 (1676–1734).

the large-smiths felt that equine-based services required more skill and technique than any used by the small-smiths and, consequently, large-smiths deserved higher status within the guild and greater share of control of the guild and its resources.²⁹ For Braunschweig in particular, the discord between the two halves of the smith guild reached a peak in the spring of 1703, when the large-smiths first petitioned for a separate guild. By November of the same year, the guild was divided, with the large-smiths uniting under the new equestrian-oriented title, Hoof-, Weapon-, and Large-Smith Guild.³⁰ By 1717, the large-smiths had further tailored the guild's name to Hoof- and Weapon-Smith, thereby emphasising their trade specialisation and communal identity in equine medicine.³¹

Issues involving the monopoly of equine-related resources can also be seen in disputes concerning self-advertisement and guild marketing at city markets. In these disputes the issues at hand involved the privileges of city and town smith guilds and the perceived encroachments of foreign and village large-smiths.³² By the mid- to late seventeenth century, guild involvement in such trade disputes became complicated by the adoption of strategic, quasi-legal methods on both sides in order to ensure their own economic future. At Harburg, the local smith guild brought petitions against any and all Hamburg-area smiths between 1647 and 1668.³³ While ducal legislation authorised country smiths as well as visiting journeymen and masters to vend at certain livestock markets, the Harburg smith guild alleged that the Hamburg-area large-smiths were bypassing these regulations by arriving days ahead of time. As the largest horse-market in Harburg took place in the days

²⁹ This group of large-smiths included men, who had undergone double periods of journeymen training before achieving a joint trade identity of large-smith and horse-doctor or large-smith and farrier. See also Staatsarchiv Wolfenbüttel (StA), 4 Alt 5, nr. 247, 25. Mai 1734. By 1734, the large-smiths who focused on equine-centric skills, along with those that created agricultural and military tools of trade, had separated from the rest of the smith guild into their own division.

³⁰ The sudden crisis was caused by an internal rift over turning the smith guild into an equine-focused farrier and medicinal guild. See Staatsarchiv Wolfenbüttel (StA), Findbuch 2 Alt 12980, 1708 and Staatsarchiv Wolfenbüttel (StA), 4 Alt 5, nr. 247, 15. November 1703.

³¹ Stadtsarchiv Braunschweig, G. VIII A, nr. 448, v. I.

³² Concerns about foreign and village tradesmen stealing guild work were common for the time period and region. For more on guild practices in Lower Saxony, see Plaß H., *Celler Bier und Celler Silber: zwei Ämter und ihr soziokultureller Stellenwert in der Stadt Celle von 1564 bis zur Einführung der Gewerbefreiheit 1867* (Münster: 2004).

³³ Hauptstaatsarchiv Hannover (HStA), Celle Br. 60, nr. 218, 1647–1668.

following several religious holidays (during which local guilds were not permitted to work), the Harburg smith guild protested that the visiting smiths were gaining an unfair advantage at the biggest yearly market for large-smiths by setting up their booths early and using the interim period to make extra stock. Presenting itself favourably as a concerned community leader, the guild also noted that Harburg citizens were themselves being harassed by the noise, being thereby unable to attend to the holiday's religious services due to the constant sounds of pounding iron.

By the late seventeenth century, Jurisdictional and procedural concerns of city and town guilds were further complicated by conflicts between local traditions and official policy and by the territorial claims of some smith guilds over neighbouring villages and markets. The issue generally boiled down to opposing opinions of the grounds on which a farrier could be refused the right to vend at public horse-markets and, if so, at what times. In a series of petitions from 1683 to 1704, the smith guilds of Bodenteich and Uelzen fought each other, state officials and ducal economic policy in order to control the vending rights of visiting and country smiths.³⁴ During this period, both towns had gained rapid economic success through increased prominence in local and regional trading networks. For the two smithing guilds, this meant that there was now a constant stream of potential customers and regulars for large-smiths and farriers, as well as a new source of financial anxiety and economic rivalry.³⁵

Early modern guild tradesmen could experiment with further derivations of economic and social power. Large-smiths and farriers often represented themselves as producers of public order at the workshop level. Since their economic position provided them with better trade resources (that is, the skilled labour and improved productivity of journeymen) than non-masters, urban equine-centric master smiths did sometimes employ economic privileges as a further mechanism for establishing social hierarchies among fellow tradesmen. In this way, the master farriers and large-smiths with equine healing skill-sets regarded themselves as providers of quality education and, con-

³⁴ Hauptstaatsarchiv Hannover (HStA), Hann. 74 Oldenstadt, nr. 579 [580], 1683–1704.

³⁵ For more on the development of Bodenteich's guild, see Vogtherr H.-J., *Die Schmiede aus Bodenteich. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des ländlichen Handwerks* (Landwirtschaftsmuseum Lüneburger Heide: 1999).

sequently, as rightful masters over the bodies of their socially inferior trade associates, whether assistants, journeymen or other masters.

Braunschweig's farrier guild, in particular, advanced this type of gendered social hierarchy among its guild-masters during the eighteenth century. By 1728, the guild had set up an internal ranking system, placing those who had mastered the skill-sets of one trade subordinate to those who had pursued additional equine-related training. For example, Heinrich Andreas Krauel was made a master of the minor guild in 1728 and achieved major guild mastership in 1740. However, it did not always take this long between stages, particularly if one had familial connections within the guild. Johann Nicolaus Krauell, a male relative of Heinrich, was master of the minor guild in 1738 and became a major guild master a mere three years later.³⁶ Familial experience, access to resources and networking certainly eased a person's progress up the guild ranks but it was not necessarily predetermined. Not only were one's failures to complete masterpieces recorded in guild register books but each failure was fined and resulted in a mandatory period of several more years training before one could apply again. A journeyman or minor master's male relatives could only take him so far. Additionally, the patriarchal system's male-defining social and economic practices promoted equine trade-based relationships between extended family members and through close ties between male members of the large- or hoof-smith guild and other equine-centric communities.

Although the example of the Krauels recognises a certain amount of autonomy on behalf of the individual male members of guild families, these types of situation still reinforced the gendered means through which resources were passed between guild patriarchs. By mentoring male relatives as well as local masters' sons, a large-smith master could ensure the continued presence of his family in the guild and maintain the quality of products associated with the family name. In the mid-eighteenth century, marriage registers from the villages and towns around Braunschweig-Lüneburg reveal that farriers from city guilds began to colonise village smithies and use them to establish hereditary franchises across the country.³⁷ Thus, large-smiths

³⁶ Heinrich's attainment of the status during the previous year likely played a role in how quickly Johann moved from minor to major guild master.

³⁷ For recent publications of Lower Saxon marriage registers, see Ritter R., *Nieder-sächsisches Trauregister Calenberger Land* (Hannover: 1993–2003) and Kaufmann J.,

and farriers from city guilds ventured into the countryside or smaller towns to look for potential brides. By the early eighteenth century the registers reveal that marriages were largely favouring male guild members at the expense of village smiths. Because the daughters and widows of guild members were encouraged to marry locally, exogamy remained a unidirectional practice from city to countryside, the culture behind the material resources of equine veterinary trades became masculinised and ultimately urbanised over the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

While this style of patriarchy was not unusual in the region during the later seventeenth century, it deserves particular mention on account of its growing promotion by urban equine tradesmen. Patriarchal development and its eventual widespread practice within the guild by the mid-eighteenth century was the result of daily decisions made by equine tradesmen, reflecting how they thought of themselves, the world (other social orders, nationalities, and races) and what was best for their trade concurrently and in the future. In this manner, urban, and usually guild-connected equine tradesmen, chose to deny outsiders the ability to gain social adulthood (by urban and state standards) as well as the opportunity to participate in local social-order and political-climbing activities, primarily to attain the status of Master and then Burgher. Unproven and unknown men, the foreign journeymen and wandering smiths, so commonly the subjects of complaint by city guild-members, were, thus, refused the main legal means through which they were granted direct access to the social network and resources of urban male privilege. It was no coincidence that farriers and large-smiths, who were also trained as horse-doctors (the main proponents of those same privileges), exercised an ever-increasing communal control over the possession, transmission and generation of equine smithing and curative knowledge.

Conclusion

While there were equine veterinary specialists at almost every court in early modern Germany, large-smiths and farriers, who paid dues to a local guild, performed most of the documented equine medicine

in cities. For both court-based prescriptive authors and urban guild-based smiths, the values and virtues that they attributed to the practice of equine veterinary medicine as a trade reinforced certain ideals of social and economic patriarchy. Even when focusing on exactly the same trade skill-sets, identities and experiences of court-based hippological authorities, the cultural practice and development of the trades themselves fundamentally differed. Describing idealised farriers and horse-doctors, the veterinary guides of nobles and court tradesmen used prescriptive equine skill-sets as a means of promoting a highly gendered view of trade identities and social hierarchies and thereby effecting change in the daily practice of equine veterinary trades at court. At the same time, the manner in which large-smith guildsmen interpreted and practised equine healthcare became grounded in notions of their masculine communal identities, which thereby had the potential to raise their own position within the guild and to change the practice of veterinary medicine in early modern urban society.

The issue of who had the legal privilege to control knowledge about and access to equine bodies influenced the direction and development of guild and ducal state policies through the seventeenth- and into the eighteenth century. Within the environment of general-smith guilds, particularly within groups of equine-focused large-smiths, tradesmen's perceptions about the meanings attached to horses' bodies began to influence how they thought of themselves as individual men and fathers, their trade and skill-sets and their relationship to other men. Although the number of cattle in the area far outnumbered horses, tradesmen considered that the equine veterinary trades had the greater value, and this perception increased exponentially over the period. Furthermore, the majority of large-smiths, who acquired additional skill-sets, also trained in equine-focused veterinary knowledge.

Although farrier and large-smith were at times interchangeable titles for some smiths, there was no progressive shift in title from large-smith to farrier over time. The title of large-smith already indicated an agriculturally necessary focus on shoeing and, possibly, on medically treating horses, and it remained in common usage well into the nineteenth century. Yet, overall, as a general trend, contemporaries considered the title of farrier to signify an additional set of trade abilities that complimented and thus added to the identity of the large-smith. It is also significant to note that multivalent smithing identities and their attendant economic privileges and social obligations clearly did not

make large-smith guild masters or members feel insecure about their own abilities. This shared sense of unity between smiths in the area of equine trade knowledge demonstrates smiths' strong belief in the value of the equine community to the continued viability of these trades through joint goals of increasing production and protection of horse bodies. There was, therefore, a linked social and economic network, in which the legitimacy of prospective male guild members depended on public performances of mastership in multiple skill-sets and in which the additional skill-sets beyond those involving metalwork were directly connected to horses' bodies and equine-focused knowledge.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, smiths who worked with equine medicine attempted to increase the status of their trade and of their own reputation through the strategic use of old and new tropes of masculinity. Somewhere among individual petitions, letters of noble privilege and bureaucratic guild and state documents, equine tradesmen produced hippological networks of trade skills and practices that relied on gendered interpretations of smithing abilities and social order. By the end of the eighteenth century, the combined force of equine-based and masculine constructions of trade identity had led to an elevation of the social and economic status of equine-curative skilled large-smiths within city guilds at the expense of the large-smiths and hoof-smiths, whose equine skill-sets were limited to hoof-shoeing and preventative medicine. The institutionalised practices and varieties of masculinity that early modern tradesmen and nobles formed through anthropomorphising their relationship to horses also directly impacted on the growth and development of the modern institutions of veterinary knowledge, namely the research and education at early German veterinary schools, which were ostensibly founded to help rural farmers cure and treat cattle plague yet in fact focused resources toward court and urban interests.

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